

RAZZORCAKE

Issue #9

\$3

Strike
Anywhere

Fleshies
Out Cold

The Briefs

Ben Hamper

The Damned

And Tribute Bands



Floor

FLOOR "Floor" LP/CD

TWELVE HOUR TURN "Bend Break Spill" 10"/CDep & "Victory of Flight" LP/CD • ASTRID OTO CD
 GUNMOLL "Anger Management in Four Chords or Less" LP/CD • COMBATWOUNDEDVETERAN "I Know..." LP/CD
 LESS THAN JAKE "Goodbye Blue & White" LP • TRAPDOOR FUCKING EXIT CD • RUMBLESEAT "Rumbleseat" CD
 ARMY OF PONCH "So Many You Could Never Win" LP/CD • PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS "Fuck with Fire" LP/CD
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& FIFTH HOUR HERO**
split -LP/CD



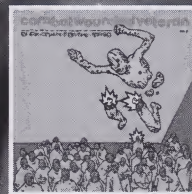
BITCHIN'
 "The Night Life,
 the Tight Style"
 -LP/CD



TWELVE HOUR TURN
 "Perfect Progress,
 Perfect Destruction"
 -LP/CD



**GRABASS CHARLESTONS
& BILLY REESE PETERS**
split -LP/CD



**COMBAT WOUNDED
VETERAN**
 "Duck Down for the
 Torso" -10"/CDep



AGAINST ME!
 "Reinventing Axl
 Rose" -LP/CD

RAZORCAKE

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PO Box 42129, Los Angeles, CA 90042
www.razorcake.com

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--Sean

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like complete and honest printer.

- Only for full-page ads, we'll accept film. Positive stats, RRED (right-reading, emulsion side down) only.
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Floor

RAZORCAKE

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fanzine

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The next 50 subscribers will receive either Strike Anywhere's Change Is a Sound or Fleshes, Kill the Dreamer's Dream, courtesy of Razorcake, Alternative Tentacles, and Jade Tree. (Sorry, but we get to choose which album).

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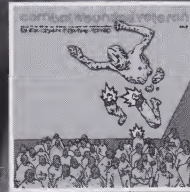
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Well, after we mailed out the last issue of *Razorcake*, I went on a spoken word tour to support my new book. While I was on that tour, I saw some incredible things. I saw a handful of high school kids in rural Pennsylvania who wanted a place to skate, so they put on a huge punk show, drawing a couple hundred kids and raising a bunch of money for their town to build a skate park. I hung out with a kid who turned his mom's East Texas blues bar into a cool punk rock venue. I saw a twenty-two year old become a de facto patron of the arts by turning the courtyard in front of his apartment into a space where local artists and performers could do their thing. After an eighteen year-old

girl found out that the show we'd booked in her town was in a bar and she and her friends couldn't get in, she set up a second, all-ages show for us in her town. In fact, everywhere I went, people were taking matters into their own hands. They were setting up independent bookstores and info shops and art galleries and zine libraries and makeshift venues. Every town I went to inspired me a little more.

Then, I thought about all these books about punk rock that have been coming out lately, and about all the jaded old guys talking about how things were more vital back in the day. But I remember a lot of those days and that overwhelming feeling that there was no future, nothing left to do but get fucked up and dance on the ruins of society. When I compare that to now, where people are actually working towards the future and struggling in their own ways to make the world a better place, I feel like the DIY culture is more vital now than it's ever been.

I got home from that tour inspired by all these kids and all the things they were doing themselves. I couldn't wait to team up with Todd and the rest of the Razorcakers and work, in our own way, towards producing something cool. So, in that vein, here's the latest issue of *Razorcake*, our little attempt to make the world — or at least your bathroom — a better place.

--Sean

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- We will not accept electronic ad files. Hard copy only.
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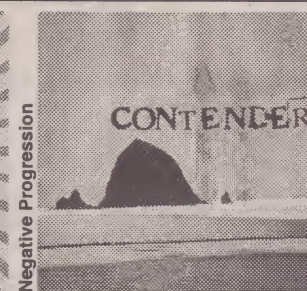
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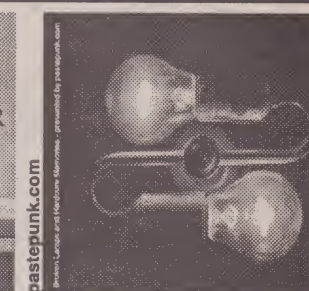
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THE GAMITS
"Come Get Some" CD
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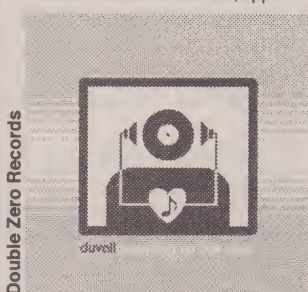
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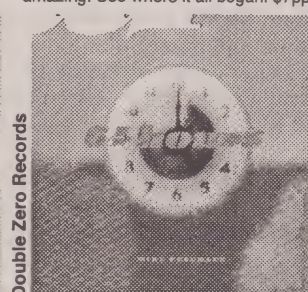
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Amazing comp w/ Thursday, Finch, Good Riddance, Movielife, Yellowcard, Count Me Out, Darkest Hour, etc. (\$6ppd)



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Law of Inertia

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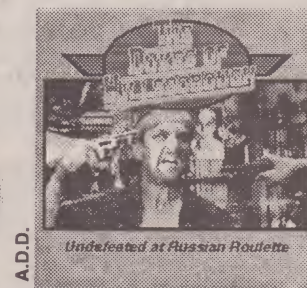
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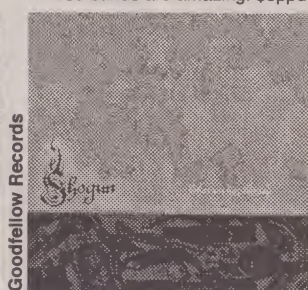
New American Dream

DISCOUNT
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Part one of a two volume collection. This volume features all of the early 7"s, comp tracks, and rarities. A must have for Discount fans. (\$10ppd)



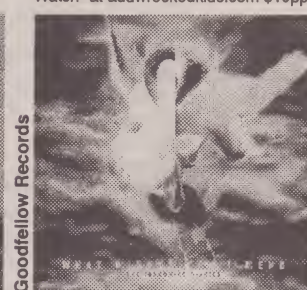
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BLOODJINN
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Fast, technical, jaw-dropping metallic precision. The "Master of Puppets" of this decade. Seriously. \$10ppd



Goodfellow Records

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Ultra-heavy, technical metal hardcore from Colorado. Songs that could put Iron Maiden to shame. \$10 ppd



Goodfellow Records

WHAT WISHES CAN'T MEND
"Insomniac Diaries" CD
From the swampy land of Florida. Think Shai Hulud meets Neurosis in the final battle. \$10 ppd



Goodfellow Records

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Pure musical power violence from Boston, MA. The bar for hardcore has just been raised. \$10 ppd

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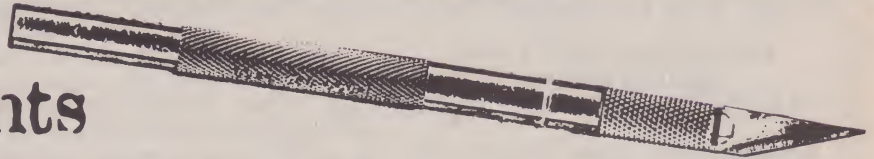
RAZORCAKE

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Razorcake is bi-monthly. Issues are \$3.00 ppd. in the U.S.

Yearly subscriptions (six issues) are \$15.00. Plus you get some free shit. These prices are only valid for people who live in the US and are not in prison. Issues and subs are more for everyone else (because we have to pay more in postage). Write us and we'll give you a price.



Not even a line of crank two-hundred feet long and the necessary lung power to sniff it all in one humongous huff could keep me awake long enough through this disc to care.

**TOO BAD YOU DIDN'T SAVE
ENOUGH ROOM
IN YOUR BACKPACK FOR TALENT**

**Wallowing in the Nobody Loves Me Pile
of the Razorcake Record Rack**

Or

**Tag Teaming E-Vile: In Which Todd and
Jimmy Feed Their Masochistic Cravings by
Reviewing a Bunch of Emo CDs in One
Marathon Sitting**

The plan was simple. Review emo and emo-looking records to clear some stuff out of Razorcake HQ's bin. Not to alienate any readers, the title "emo" is supposed to be a shortening of the word "emotional," which has quickly become a pretty retarded, yet heavily regarded, name of a genre. Why do I find it stupid? Because if music's made by people and not robots, it's inherently emotional on some level. The problem is that the emo tag has been hijacked by band after band of mealy-mouthed pansies (no offense to the flower), opting for one of two basic emotions: complaining and having a poetic license to be very, very vague.

One gripe people who haven't reviewed more than ten records in their lives is, "You should give it a fair shake. You should judge it on its own merits." On paper, it sounds fine, but what're your feelings if someone takes poop after poop directly into your ear? Humanity, fairness, and hugs play less of a role. So, it's snap judgement time, and a time to lose potential advertisers. Fuck it. Even though I'm not quite sure what the exact aesthetic of *Razorcake* is — and keep in mind I'm one of the founders — I don't know one out of our thirty-or-so reviewers who likes emo, even passively. Why the hatred? Why the aversion? Time to stick the needles in the ears and find out.

One problem in this line of business is that, if you haven't heard of the band, and you throw away all the press material that comes with it (which is a matter of principle for me, plus we just don't have the room), all you have left is the record. For better or worse, you must judge it by its cover before it's even thought of being played on the stereo. This isn't a very nice thing to admit, yet we have our lives to think about. Listening to a crap record takes precious time away from brushing our teeth, changing spark plugs, and making breakfasts with reconstituted french fries stirred into scrambled eggs.

Important things, indeed.

I couldn't do it alone, so I bamboozled an intrepid (and highly susceptible to praise) cohort, Jimmy Alvarado. For the past seven years, both he and I have reviewed — quite literally — a few thousand records. I figured it was time we did it together. So, with a cardigan pulled closely, box of tissue at the ready, white belt cinched tight, I gave Mr. Alvarado a little hair gel so he could Romulan-up his bangs while he made sure my backpack was secure. We were ready to go into the weenie-fied emo trenches. We knew the goings would be rough, mano-a-mano, old fashioned knife fight style. We're professionals.

Just like witnessing a crime, Jimmy's recollections of these events are a little different than mine. Here's what he had to say.

—ReTodd



*This is the visual equivalent to emo.
Cry to get in the right mood.*

In theory, it sounded like a perfectly good idea when Todd called that morning.

"Hey, Jimmy," he said.

"Hey yourself," I responded, hell-bent on not being one-upped.

"Listen," he began, "I was sitting here, looking at the piles of emo CDs no one is crazy enough to look at, let alone touch, and it came to me: Why don't I just call up one of our staffers and see if we can't clear some of this dreck off

the shelves in one foul swoop?"

"Well, when I called Dale and told him of my idea, he said he was unfortunately unable to participate as he had a pressing appointment to have his "Beat on the Brat" promotional baseball bat's display case bulletproofed. When I asked Sean, he mumbled something I couldn't quite make out, holed up in his room, and told me to keep him out of it unless we were going to sell the CDs back. Maddy said something about a court order, stemming from a wild criminal escapade involving Honey Bunches of Oats, preventing her from leaving her current state of residence. Rich is on tour again, Money claimed to only listen to tapes, and Don called my mother a series of increasingly rude names. So.... You wanna come over and help me do a little emo reviewin'? You're easily the most integral part, the lynchpin if you will, of the Razorcake family and we would be completely unable to function as the huge corporate entity we have become without your keen observations about the music world. We need you, buddy."

Realizing that my services were once again needed and noting that Todd had not resorted to giving me some snow job to get me aboard to do what needed to be done, I happily signed on.

Call it selective hearing, call it blocking out those things that traumatize us most, call it a leaky noggin', but the word "emo" didn't register until I was halfway to Razorcake's corporate offices. By then I figured it was too much hassle to turn around and, besides, running through a gang of emo CDs in one sitting couldn't possibly be much more taxing to either my or Todd's psyche than doing it over a month's time. Besides, the wife was at a meeting with the labor reps for the sweatshop we co-own with Kathy Lee, so I had oodles of free time. With that, I pressed on.

I was met in the penthouse suite atop Razor Tower in Razorcake Circle (in downtown Beverly Hills, for those not in the know) by Todd, who carried with him a black Hefty bag filled to bursting with compact discs covered with fuzzy, grainy photos of assorted trees and sunsets and ratty old tennis shoes and flowers. I looked at him warily.

"As you've probably guessed," he started, "contained in this bag is our assignment. I know it looks like quite a bit of work, and I can tell from that look of abject terror on your mug that you feel just a teeny bit apprehensive about the whole thing."

I had to admit that he had me pegged there. And then some.

"Well, let me put your mind at ease, Jimmy, 'cause it ain't gonna be all that bad. See, I've got

a plan and some ground rules that will get us through this pile of steaming emo love in under two hours flat.

"First rule is: we listen to each disc for thirteen seconds, max. This will prevent any feelings of complete despondency resulting from the prolonged listening of these discs from setting in too deep and will keep the risk of bleeding ears to a minimum.

"Second rule is: we each say the first thing that comes to mind into this little pocket tape recorder I have here. This will eliminate the trouble of having to think too much about the crap invading our eardrums and minimize the risk of irreparable psychological damage and insanity.

"Third rule is: we take lots of breaks, to avoid any potential rotten moods that may develop.

"Fourth rule is: eat kosher salami."

With that last bit of piss-poor Ramones humor, we set to our task with the full expectation that we would be through in an hour, tops.

Four days later we emerged, tired, delirious and more than a little grouchy. Although neither of us have any concrete recollection of it, some Razorcake employees on the 112th floor said that I had seemed to have developed a nervous tic and was mumbling something about "monkey pus." Todd was said to be clutching two handfuls of what looked like his own hair and screaming uncontrollably.

"It sounded like he was either calling for his mommy to loosen the straps to his backpack, or was fixated on a food order he wanted made at a nearby Jack-in-the-Box," Suzy Horowitz of the advertising department said. "I was terrified."

Three weeks later, Todd and I reentered the scene of the crime, desperate to find out what we accomplished and what went so horribly wrong during those four days of utter hell.

Of the 327 discs slated for review, we apparently made it through nineteen. What follows is the fruit of that labor.

-Jimmy Alvarado

The Culprits: Destro

The Crime: *The Accuracy of Broken Whispers*

Responsible Party: Ides of March

Jimmy: Surprise, surprise, a hardcore band. Got that modern HC sound and an Ian MacKaye soundbite from *Another State of Mind* to boot. 1,000 punker points off for releasing something that looked like an emo record.

Todd: Fire your graphic artist. What does cursive handwriting over an incomprehensible - yet

very pink - cover convey? Pussy, not straightedge screamo band.

The Culprits: Death of Marat

The Crime: *All Eyes Open*

Responsible Party: Stick Figure

Jimmy: With a band name that pretentious, it's hard to believe that the members actually had the balls to put their names on this. Nope, there they are in all their glory. Good thing they didn't include addresses.

Todd: They named the band after a painting by a French painter from the 18th century, the cover looks like vertical blinds pulled open,



This is the visual equivalent to punk. Note beer gut and frantic movements.

there's no lyric sheet, and the music's obtuse as hell, self-absorbed, repetitive, like a toothless Unwound. Art school chodes! More indie than emo, but still real fruity.

The Culprits: Gravity Willing

The Crime: *Requia*

Responsible Party: Vagabond

Todd: Sullen bridge on the cover. Morning comes. I never thought a band could make the Crash Test Dummies sound hardcore. Argh. More of the barely readable cursive handwriting that hides the fact that this is folksy, adult contemporary poo in the shoe.

Jimmy: Pearl Jam goes emo. Included is a twenty-five second track of total silence and that, dear friends, was, hands down, the best track.

The Culprits: On the Might of Princes

The Crime: *Where You Are and Where You Want to Be*

Responsible Party: Traffic Violation

Jimmy: See the two guys on the cover of this (a fat dude and a skinny dude running on the beach)? They're running away from their stereos. Why? Because they put this disc on and it got stuck in the player.

Todd: Emo to screamo back to emo again. It's a classic example of how hardcore got confused up into emo,

The Culprits: Audiocrush

The Crime: *So You Call These Flowers*

Responsible Party: Lorelei

Jimmy: Any band with a song entitled "Autumn Leaves" deserves a solid kick to the nuts. Any band that follows said song title by polluting the air with music this bad is just screaming for a solid kick to the nuts. By the way, "a new," which is how you spelled it, is actually one word.

Todd: Question. If you have a picture of a metal-bladed fan on the cover of your album...

and half the band members end up with beards. And the song title, "The Water Vs. the Anchor"? Come on. That's what anchors are used for. What's next? "The Bricklayer Vs. the Trowel"? "Musician Vs. the Microphone"? Ohhh, the humanity. Two points for the fat kid running in his bathing suit on the cover, but five points off for the overly-blurry-you-can't-make-out-the-picture photo on the back and the super clear picture of a U-haul on the insert

The Culprits: 200 North

The Crime: *Watching the World Die*

Responsible Party: Forgot to look before we dumped the trash.

Jimmy: Apparently, 200 North has done us a favor. Their CD is broken. Thanks, guys.

Todd: I think their tears broke the CD.

Jimmy: Dude, I didn't even know it was a fan.

Todd: Seriously, how do you expect it to sell? "Man, I'm a fan. It's a fan on the cover. It's so mine."

Jimmy: The song's really titled, "Space Before the Question Mark"?

Todd: Why would there be a space before a question mark?... Waah? He's saying his prayers before supper and the song's not about grammar? You think if a supreme deity was involved, these songs would kick super celestial ass, or at least itty bitty hamster ass. Can't I just get a clear answer? Why is art so confusing for a pop punk band? And the picture of the blurry disco ball doesn't help matters at all, either.

Jimmy: Is that a disco ball or a city skyline? It looks like a building at the same time.

RAZORCAKE 3

Todd: It's the Death Star, killing music from the inside.

The Culprits: Flipping Hades
The Crime: Tell Peaches Lula Called

Responsible Party: Derailleur
Jimmy: I wonder if these guys find themselves last on every bill they play, 'cause with college bar-band music this bad, they can probably clear a room with little effort.

Todd: On the cover, there's a picture of a someone answering a phone, surrounded by film negatives and someone eating a microphone.

Jimmy: And there's a Telecaster and a Stratocaster on the inside back, which, I guess, gives them alt rock points, too.

Todd: Hmm... [head scratch] Fuck.... I don't know what to say about that.

The Culprits: 32 Forty
The Crime: Hearts and Mirrors
Responsible Party: Lotus

Jimmy: This puppy has so moved me that I am inspired to write a poem about it: "Emo pop/ makes my colon drop/ its hefty load/ like pie a la mode /you make me want to climb into a bell tower and smoke four hundred people just to ease the agony of having to listen to your trite songs/ refrigerator mouthwash." I'm especially proud of the surrealism at the end there. Hope my English professor thinks it's worthy of an "A."

Todd: The cover, when you get Photoshop, there's installed images that come free with the program. The heart one? They cut it and taped it.

Jimmy: Ooh. Punk rock. Dude, are these guys from Texas?

Todd: Florida.

Jimmy: Figures.

Todd: What's terribly confusing is that one of the guys on the back of the insert—the tattooee one—looks like he could be in Agnostic Front, but if you listen to the CD, you'd be convinced he's just a really, really good knitter.

Jimmy: Either he's a really good knitter or he's wearing that beanie for Chicano points or something. [At this point, Sean pokes his head out of his room and looks suspiciously around.]

Todd: It's pop emo. They thank someone for their "sweet backups."

Sean: Survivor's gonna be pissed.

Todd: Excellent.

The Culprits: Audio Karate
The Crime: Space Camp
Responsible Party: Kung Fu

Jimmy: Complete, utter garbage. Your friends at bible study class must be dropping your names like motherfuckers, though.

RAZORCAKE [6] **Todd:** "I remember

when we first met. It was freshman summer. I can't forget. I day-dreamed of you and I wrote your name in my folder a thousand times." [huge amounts of laughter] That starts out the album. Just because it's in your Pee-Chee doesn't mean it should be a song, for crap's sake. One guy's wearing a Backstreet Boys shirt.

Jimmy: Are you kidding me?

Todd: No.

Jimmy: I guess they're another band trying to blur the line between punk rock boy bands and regular run-of-the-mill boy bands.

Todd: They probably buy the floor pumps of hair gel. They've got the intentional tousle down to a tight science.

[record goes in]

Todd: What's wrong with your people, Jimmy? Why are they giving into The Man?

Jimmy: Dude, I'm getting very, very upset. Four Latinos... these are Valley Chicanos. Man, they don't count. It's like saying the French people are the embodiment of all things Caucasian.

The Culprits: Time Spent Driving
The Crime: Just Enough Bright
Responsible Party: Sessions

[record goes in]

Jimmy: You know, the more I hear this emo crap, the more I realize that they are desperately trying to relive the glory days of Fleetwood Mac, the Eagles and James Taylor. Same quiet, laid-back quality that sounds about as threatening as a declawed kitten, as emotional as a Cylon raider and as good as a tone-deaf Counting Crows singer warbling "Rhiannon" while thinking it's about the most compelling song since Manilow's "Mandy."

Todd: It's blurring together. It's kind of like if the Keebler Elves went techno. It's like an audio version of a braided belt.

Jimmy: Time Spent Crying. What I want to know is when the words punk rock came to equate MOR radio music.

Todd: MOR or AOR (album-oriented rock)?

Jimmy: Middle of the road.

Sean: Didn't you already play this one?

Todd: Is that chimes? They're playing chimes. Hey, they thank Audiocrush in their liner notes.

Sean: [leaving] It's too hard to be funny when you're fuckin' angry at all this shit.

The Culprits: Moneen
The Crime: As Told by Dr. Lazlo Pronowski

Responsible Party: Smallman

Jimmy: This abomination only served to make my headache intensify. I thought it was a grind album to begin with 'cause of this wall of

noise, then there was a four click and that was the end of that.

Todd: It's schizophrenic. It starts out mean then quickly whimpers, cowers, and harmonizes in the corner. They've got a band member named Hippie. Are these guys psychic or related to Dionne Warwick? They've got the lyric, "I wanted to cry."

[Beers crack open. Todd can't drink 'em fast enough. Jimmy pounds ice tea.]

The Culprits: Caesura
The Crime: More Specific Less Pacific

Responsible Party: 54° 40' or Fight

Jimmy: No matter how much you dress them up with neat dynamics and edgy production values, shitty songs remain shitty songs.

Todd: I didn't know Jawbox's slow half sister were still around. With pictures of cranes on the cover and lyrics like "subrosa sobriquet distance never hesitates," it sounds like their music's made by tired thesaurus machines. Jesus, what he just said is "private nickname's distance never hesitates." Sir, you're a bonafide dick.

Jimmy: It's sad enough when emo has this high art quotient to begin with, but when emo artists try to sound arty, it's even worse.

The Culprits: Ampline
The Crime: The Choir
Responsible Party: Tiberius

Jimmy: Instrumental emo. Jeepers. What a novel, new approach to a wretched genre and a whole new pigeonhole to loathe. Thanks.

Todd: You'd think with the cleansing of the vocals, it'd improve. The instruments seem to whine. Sweet Jesus, a vibraphone? You know it's bad when I'm hoping for it to get to the verge of at least Herb Albert. The cover's a backlit airplane prop. The inside's blurry motion. New category invented: Artpoop.

The Culprits: Code Seven
The Crime: The Rescue
Responsible Party: The Music Cartel

Todd: Guess which one's made up: "The Sounds of Cyan and Magenta" or "Memories in Yellow and Black"? One's a real song title. Bands like these make pictures of recording studios look like crime scenes.

Jimmy: Not even a line of crank two-hundred feet long and the necessary lung power to sniff it all in one humongous huff could keep me awake long enough through this disc to care.

The Culprits: Gold Circles
The Crime: Abuse the Magic
Responsible Party: Copter Crash

Jimmy: Someone get the singer some Pepto-Bismol quick! Judging from the way he's singing, his band's music is giving him a tummy ache.

Todd: "I hear you smoke while you cry on the phone that's far away." Jimmy... Jimmy? Why're you crying. Don't cry. The CD's nearly over. [Reaches for eject button] It's okay.

The Culprits: Sixty Stories/ Painted Thin

The Crime: Different Places to Sit
Responsible Party: Small Man

Jimmy: Two shitty bands for the price of one! What a bargain!

Todd: Sixty Stories, turn off the Intellivision blipping and beeping in the background before hitting the "record" buttons. Painted Thin is listed as "was" instead of "is." Does that mean they broke up? [High fives are exchanged.]

The Culprits: Todd Larry Lloyd
The Crime: Your Dumb Idea
Responsible Party: Unity Versus Apathy

Todd: I like it when bands put right-on, self-fulfilling prophecies in their lyrics. Makes the job easier. "Like you and me, it's all stupid."

Jimmy: Lame college-boy attempts at being cool and musically daring. Next time Todd and Larry (the two responsible for this) wonder why they got beat with astonishing regularity back in school, all they need to do is put this back on and the memories will come flooding back.

The Culprits: Necronauts
The Crime: Melodic Array of Change

Responsible Party: High School Football

Jimmy: Billie Joe Green Day hooks up with Sugar Ray and they all indulge in a full-on, double-fisted circle jerk. You're gonna go blind, kiddies.

Todd: How much irony and post-whateverthefuck can a band dole out until they realize joke's on them?

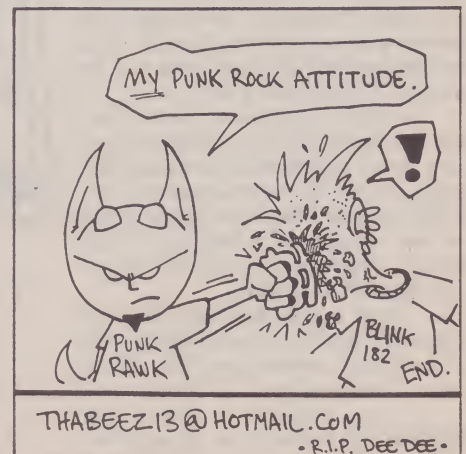
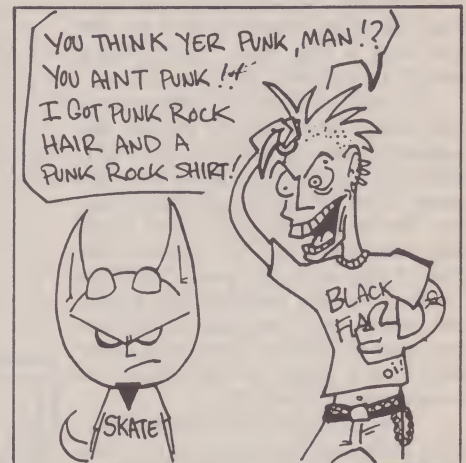
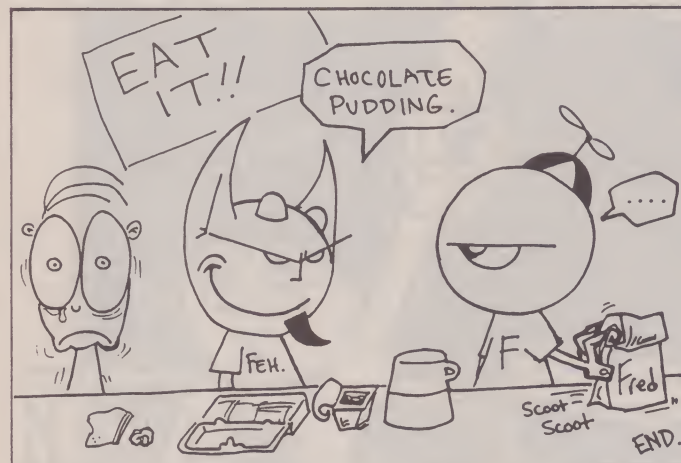
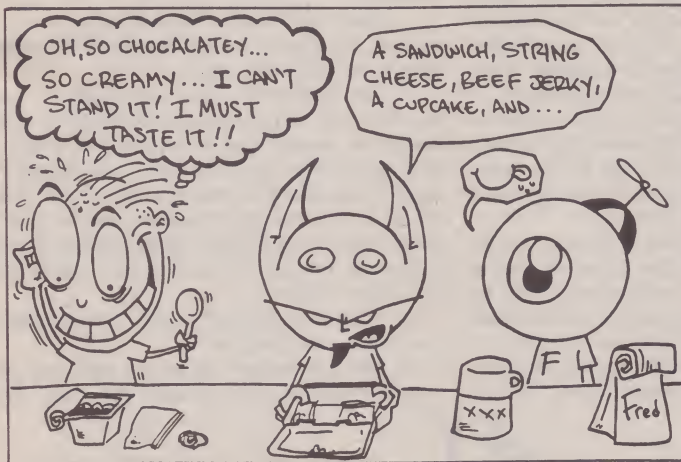
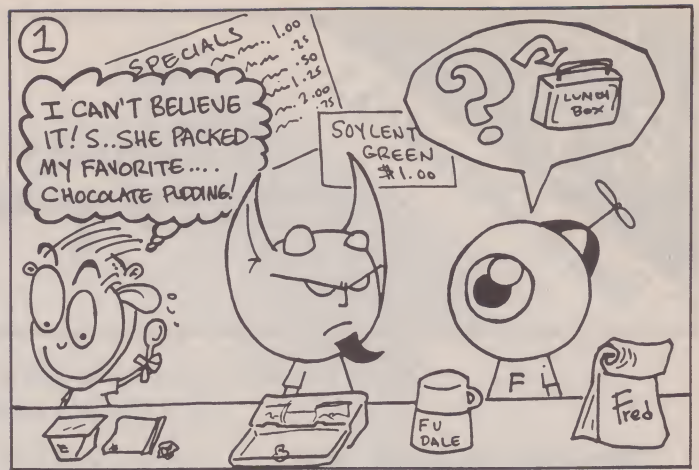
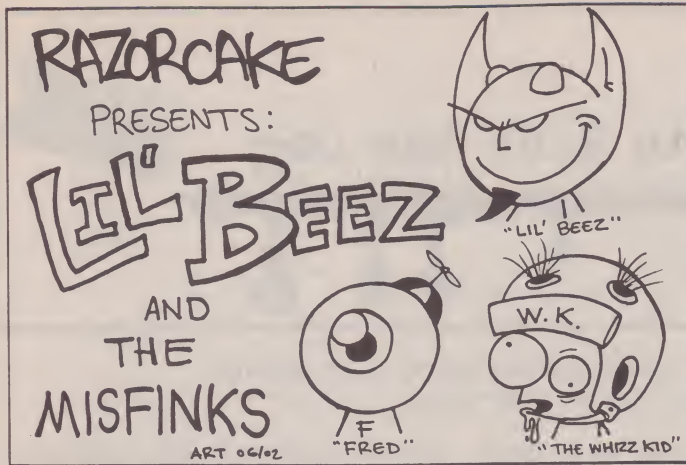
The Culprits: Jet By Day
The Crime: The Feedback That Distracts Us

Responsible Party: Moodswing
Jimmy: Too bad it didn't distract you enough to quit playing.

Todd: Or go deaf. Or lose some fingers. Looking for a hook. Looking for a chorus. Looking for redeeming quality. Man,... powers... draining... can't... make... fun... of....

Jimmy: I think I'm gonna go out and buy a dog now so I can take it home and kick it a couple times.







Sean Carswell

A Monkey to Ride the Dog

*I didn't wonder what upset him or where he was running to or anything.
I just thought, damn, that kid looks funny.*

THE SCREAMING KID

I was on my way to the post office when I got to where the old library used to be and the new library is being built. There's a long row of scaffolding protecting pedestrians from the construction site. I stepped under the scaffolding and noticed a woman and her son walking towards me. The son wasn't watching where he was going. He seemed intent on staring at his feet and letting them take him wherever they wanted to go. The mom walked about a step ahead of him. Between the two of them, they took up the whole sidewalk. I realized that, if I kept walking, I'd walk into the kid staring at his feet, so I just stopped. I figured I'd let the kid make his own mistakes.

Sure enough, the kid didn't look up and walked right into me, his forehead bouncing off my thigh. His mom didn't say anything. The kid didn't say anything. He didn't even look up at me. He just took a step back, then walked around. I didn't think anything of it.

I walked down the long row of scaffolding, idly checking out the ads pasted on the plywood to my right. Mostly movie posters. Nothing too interesting. I checked out the graffiti painted over the ads and saw that Thief Turtle had struck again (not that I know who Thief Turtle is. I only know that Thief Turtle is the only neighborhood graffiti artist whose tag I can read). I also saw that some kid with a Sharpie had given Meg Ryan a goatee on every *Kate and Leopold* poster. Good kid.

As I got to the end of the scaffolding, I saw a little boy, maybe two or three years-old, on a full sprint. He was heading straight towards me, screaming, tears streaking down his dirty face, his arms flailing over his head. And, man, was he running. The kid was quick.

It didn't occur to me at the time that a two-year-old boy shouldn't be running down the sidewalk by himself (I mean, it's not like he was out for a jog). I didn't wonder what upset him or where he was running to or anything. I just thought, damn, that kid looks funny. I even laughed to myself.

I took another few steps down the sidewalk. There's a park on the other side of the library construction zone, and all the way across the park, forty yards away from me, a woman who

was running at a full sprint, too. Just like the kid. Only not nearly as fast. The woman was a good thirty-five pounds overweight and looked like she hadn't run in years. The boy, on the other hand, was booking it down the sidewalk. Arms still flailing above his head. Still screaming.

Finally, it clicked in my mind. I realized that the woman in the park was trying to catch her child, and her child was way too far away and way too close to the traffic roaring down Figueroa Street. I took off running.

The kid had about twenty yards on me by this point, but I could travel as far in one step as he could travel in three. I bore down on him, my boots clomping on the sidewalk, my wallet chain jangling. The kid heard this and stopped. He turned and looked at me wide-eyed, completely petrified by this big man chasing him. The kid

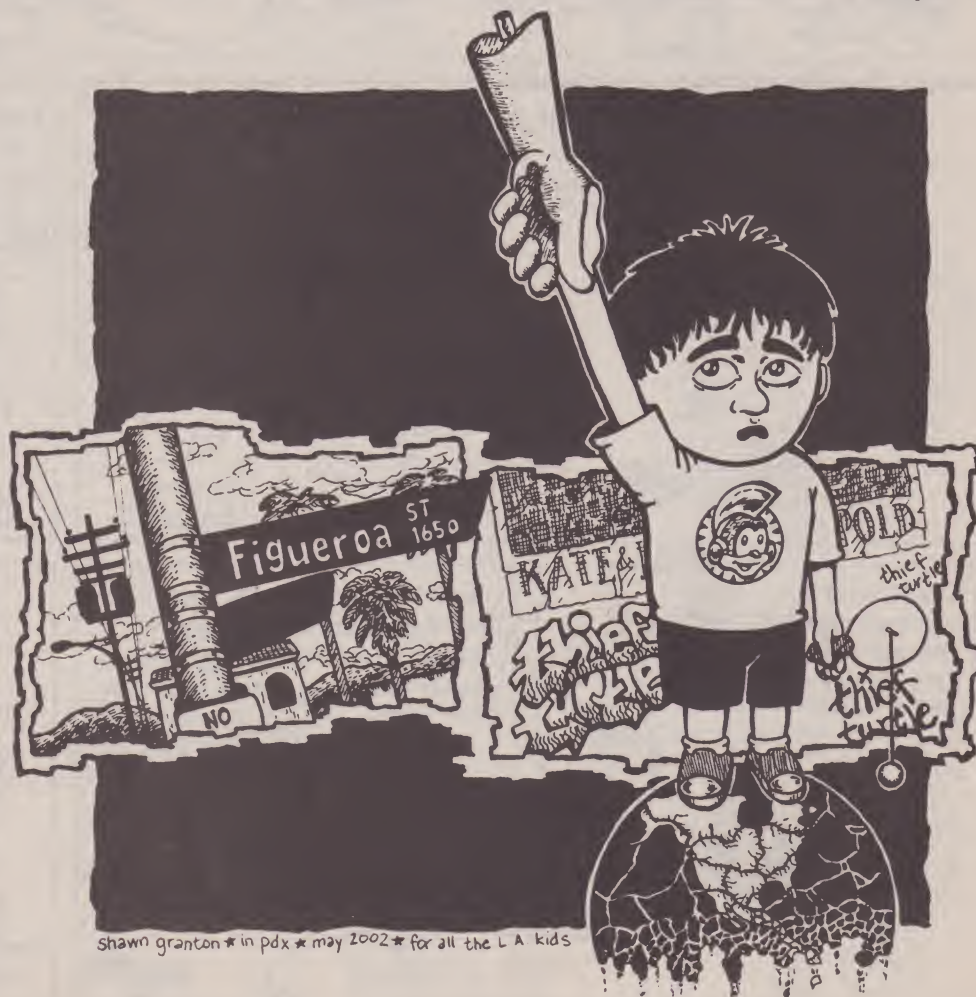
looked so scared that he scared me. I stopped running.

"Hey pal," I said. "I think you're scaring the crap out of your mom. Why don't you come back to the park with me?"

The kid stared at me. Nothing in his face demonstrated that he understood what I'd said. Maybe he wasn't used to an adult who didn't baby-talk him or maybe he wasn't old enough to speak. Most likely, he was just like all the other young kids in the neighborhood, and he didn't speak English yet. I thought about talking to him in Spanish. Not that I speak Spanish. I don't. But do I know *vamos*.

"Come on, buddy," I said. "Let's not give your mom a heart attack."

The kid walked up to my side, and we started walking back towards the park. The



shawn granton ★ in pdx ★ may 2002 ★ for all the L A kids

woman came out of the park gate and onto the sidewalk. She saw me and her kid and realized that everything was safe. She tried to talk, but was breathing too heavily to say much. All I could make out was a "Thanks."

The kid walked up to her. She scooped him up in her arms. "He was chasing his mother," the woman said.

This made no sense to me. It took me a few steps to sort it out in my mind. Okay, I finally realized, this woman must be the kid's grandmother. The mom must've been that woman who I'd seen a few minutes earlier, whose son walked into my thigh. And this little boy must've thought his mom had left him, so he panicked and made a run for it.

The kid looked at me over his grandmother's shoulder, his hair matted against his forehead, lines on his face where the tears had cut through the dirt, leaving a dry wash on his cheek. An *arroyo seco*. I smiled to the kid. The kid didn't smile back. He just kept staring at me. His grandmother walked through the gate and back into the park. I headed straight, towards the post office.

I passed the park again on the way home. The kid's mom and brother had returned, and all four of them were sitting around a park bench, eating burgers and fries from the hamburger stand on the corner. I watched the little kid stuff his face and thought, how about that? That kid's world fell apart and came back together and he even got an order of fries on the side.

For the next couple of days, I couldn't get that simple little incident out of my head. I kept thinking about that little kid sprinting past me,

screaming and crying. I kept picturing his tear-streaked face. I couldn't figure out why it had any effect on me at all. At first, I thought maybe I just felt good because I saved that kid from a dangerous situation. But let's be realistic. I didn't do anything. That kid was pretty well protected by the scaffolding. It would've been tough for him to run out into traffic, and he probably would've tired himself out before he got to any cross streets.

Next, I thought that maybe I was impressed because I'd seen the kid's world crumble and rebuild all in the time it took me to pick up my mail. But that wasn't it, either. I'm not that sympathetic. And I hate to sound callous, but I live in a big city where gunshots and car wrecks and ghetto birds aren't necessarily a daily chorus, but they rip through the silence of my day all too often. People's worlds crumble around me all the time. It never seems to penetrate the shell I've built around myself.

For a few days, as I walked around the neighborhood, my slight brushes with people, my glimpses into their lives became more acute. I walked behind two short, Guatemalan women for about a block one morning. Then they stopped and faced each other. One of the women put her hand on the other woman's cheek and kissed her forehead. I walked past them.

I saw the people downstairs climbing into their Honda one afternoon. Both of the little girls were decked out in identical dresses that their mother had probably sewn for them. I smiled to the youngest girl. She said something to me. I only picked up on the first and last words of her sentence: *hola* and *abuelos*. Going to see the grandparents, I figured. "That's cool,"

I said to her. "Have fun." She clearly didn't understand, but smiled and climbed into the backseat. This made me think about my inability to talk to children like anything but adults, and it reminded me of the screaming kid. I thought about how long it had taken me to react to a child acting hysterically, and realized that I'd probably be a pretty lousy father. But that wasn't why I kept thinking about my little encounter. I thought about it more and told people the story of the little kid.

I walked to the post office every day, and looked out across the park at moms and kids and swings and slides and tattooed guys playing basketball. Every time I walked past the park, the gate was closed. It wasn't locked or anything. Anyone could walk into or out of the park, as long as they were tall enough to lift the latch. The gate only kept in the kids who were too small to open it. I noticed this and, finally, it clicked in my mind.

Okay, I thought, that's why that little kid impressed me so much. Because that gate was always closed. Every time that kid played in the park, he was locked in. And one day, when the world wasn't working out the way he thought it should, he saw that the gate was open to him. The world behind the gate was big and dangerous and full of uncertainties. Anything could've happened and, more than likely, he'd get devoured out there, but it didn't matter. He had a plan to make things better and he went for it. Screaming and crying and arms flailing over his head, sure, but the little guy still went for it, didn't he?

— Sean Carswell

Sean Carswell



◆ THE BLACK ◆
◆ RETAIL SLUT ◆
◆ DR. STRANGE ◆
◆ RE: STYLE ◆
◆ WILD PLANET ◆

◆ ELECTRIC CHAIR ◆
◆ VINYL SOLUTION ◆

◆ ROCKET THREE ◆
◆ IPSO FACTO ◆

◆ GREENE RECORDS ◆
◆ HEAD HUNTERS ◆

◆ THE ASYLUM ◆
◆ NATHAN'S TATTOOS ◆
◆ STYX ◆
◆ HEADLINE RECORDS ◆
◆ TRASH CITY ◆
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Ayn Imperato

94103



I feel good. I haven't inflicted gratuitous violence on a drunk man. I am in control of my destiny!

TWO DRINK MAXIMUM

The time has finally come. The city breathes a collective sigh. I am enacting the *two drink maximum* — the limited amount of drinks that I will consume in a public forum. It's not a set-in-cement law, just a general rule of thumb I've finally set to measure my alcohol intake, to prevent myself from segueing into a drunken blitz where anything goes and does.

Not that there will be no indulging in inebriated shenanigans. The shenanigans will continue. Just not *every single time* I enter a liquor-bearing establishment. If I don't set these boundaries, more often than not the two drink turns into the four-to-six

drink zone where other things start to happen.

Around four drinks I lose all wit, yet proclaim what I think are mental gems loudly in the street. In addition, I lose the ability to correctly determine what is right and wrong to say, yet the words erupt like booze-induced Tourettes.

Sometimes the four-to-six drink zone slides into the eight to ten drink zone which is another place altogether. One of two things happen in this zone — and once I'm in the zone I never know which way it's going to go.

The first possibility in the eight-to-ten zone is a fun, riotous evening, worthy of retelling with others on more sober occasions, when there are no bands in town and the liquor cabinet is dry. These are the moments of swiped

garden gnomes hoisted through the night from bar to bar. These are the flaming hula hoop barbecue afternoons. The fireworks-going-straight-through-the-neighbor's-kitchen-window party. This is one possibility.

The second possibility is that I lose that particular filter in my head that weeds out That Which Should Not Be Said. That Which Should Not Be Said might include telling someone that, yes, their band does actually suck. Calling a guy's girlfriend a "Stepford Wife" is another example of That Which Should Not Be Said.

Around this point I say That Which Should Not Be Said with some frequency. The fact that it is also That Which Is True and produces chuckles from all witnesses at a later point in time is irrele-

vant. Instead it is a reason not to drink.

In these extreme drunken moments I am, as well, inhibitionally challenged to the point of near social retardation. This leads to cringe-worthy exploits — having sex in the extremely well frequented (and well lit) Boston Market parking lot, walking solo along a notably less well lit freeway at 4 AM because it seemed like a strangely beautiful thing to do at the time, doing cocaine in bathrooms with underage boys — it's not a pretty picture. These are not things I would do if I was even quasi-sober, and therein lies the rub: the two drink maximum.

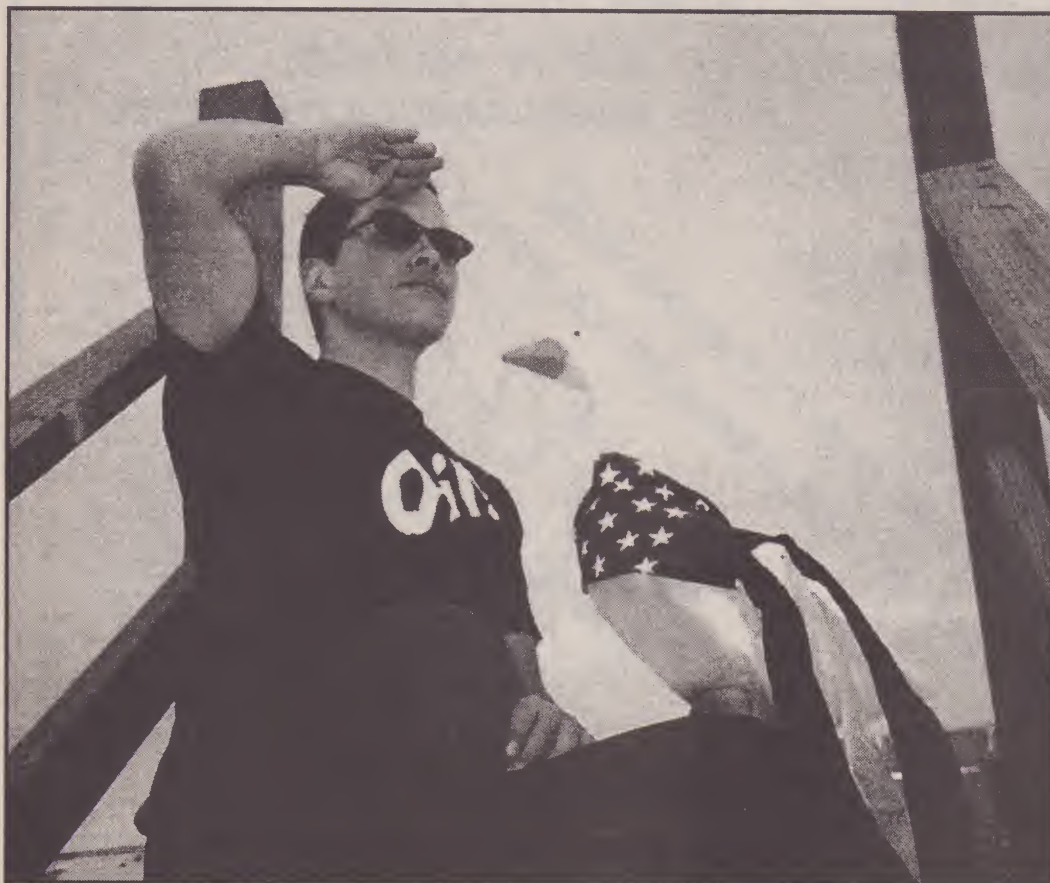
My first thought on the matter: A drink maximum? Do people actually do such a thing — go out and plan the amount of liquor they will consume in an evening? This is a revelation. I have trouble with boundaries — it dampens possibility. My favorite moments have been spontaneous acts. Spontaneous drunken acts, for sure. My least favorite moments, however, were also off the cuff and nearly always involved booze. So what does that mean? It means I shall hang my head and accept the maximum allowable drinks, even if it means the maximum allowable fun.

But there are just so many reasons to drink. Which brings me to those. On first thought it seems there are too many to list.

Other than the obvious motivator — fun — I do it to forget, for an evening, the grind of daily life. I drink in reverence to punk rock — its silly insanity — and conversely to tune out the petty music scene bullshit that goes along with it. I drink because I live in San Francisco — it's a big, cold city and life is pain. Does life look better through a 40 oz. lens? Considerably so. Yet I'm inching towards 16 oz. frames — I think there is a balance.

Some say drinking is a cop out. Maybe it is. But not any more than the coffee fix I use to ease my mind into function in the morning.

Ayn Imperato



And non-drinkers just seem more, well, *tense*. It needs to be released and, other than sex or another form of exercise, I can't think of a better way to let go than a simple beer.

My first evening of the *two drink maximum* brings me to a larger sized club *early* to meet the punk band who is opening that night—first big mistake. The doorman pulls the rock star moves: “Can’t let you in unless you’re in the band.”

“They’re friends, it’s cool.”

He puffs out his chest. “Can’t do it.” The guy is getting paid to stand here and tell me I can’t enter an empty club that I will be entering anyway in a few minutes.

“Really, I just want to talk to some friends inside for a minute. I’m on the guest list even, so it doesn’t really matter if I don’t come out again to pay.” It’s just a small punk line up tonight, not the Rolling Stones for god sake. “Look, I’m not a stalker for a band that no one has even heard of.”

“Doors don’t open for a half an hour.” He looks away as though I have already vanished from sight.

“Fine.” I walk down the street to kill a half an hour in a better way than conversing with this

six foot fool.

Two drink maximum. Two drink maximum.

Half a block down the street I run into an acquaintance who glides me effortlessly inside. “Riding coattails?” the bouncer smirks, as though it was a big accomplishment on my part to join my own friends inside the empty club. So I walk inside. I’m early. No one, I mean no one, is there yet. No people. No bands. There is nothing but the bar—a large, pretty wood square with all those shiny bottles. Only the bartender is standing there, tapping the wood with his fingers.

Well, what the hell. I can drink *two*, right?

I sit down and have a beer. A single beer. I am going to nurse this baby until it is warm in my hand. I hold it. It’s cool and wet. I drink slowly, a sip of malt sliding down—just a little. It’s an art, this slowness. It’s not my speed. I chat with the bartender for a minute. A girl materializes in an archway—the coat girl—and walks over to hang around. She sits next to me, quiet. Ten, fifteen, twenty minutes go by. The ice water from the outside of the beer drips down my hand, which aches from holding it in the same stiff position that my hand is unaccustomed to. My wrist

is used to motion when holding these babies and I’m starting to get bored, waiting. There is only the cool beer in my hand, dripping its sweetness over my fingers. Just another small little sip. A little malty foam on the tongue. *Two drink maximum. Two drink maximum.*

Sitting there, my mind starts to wander. I think about my evening earlier at the gym. My small attempt at releasing stress in a healthy way—foiled again. Note to self: do not under any circumstances wear t-shirts with any sort of writing on them whatsoever to the gym. To do so as a female is to leave yourself open to conversation from dufuses in purple pull-on pants: “*The Sti-tches. Is that a band? They sound creepy!*” Can’t he see I’m lifting weights for god sake? Why doesn’t he bother the 250-pound meathead on the bench press? Do I have a sign on my forehead: **LOOKING FOR HOT MALE PURPLE PANTSUIT ACTION?**

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Two drink maximum. Two drink maximum.

At the club a few people filter in. A random guy comes up to me, gives me the once over twice

and asks me which band I am waiting for. He thinks I am a groupie. I look down at the beer. The bottle is sweating. *Two drink maximum.*

“I’m waiting for some friends.”

He looks at my fishnet stockings. “*Fr-ie-nds*,” he says, chuckling, and walks off. *Two drink maximum. Two drink fucking maximum.* I look away and lift that bottle for the final gulp of beer which slides down like beautiful relief. In the end I have shredded the label, warmed the glass, and feel I have performed an unnatural act with the bottle.

Finally, said friends—the opening band—arrive. But they haven’t even set up their equipment and I’ve polished one off already. And I’m in a sour mood now which doesn’t mix well with either booze or restraint.

But in the end the evening passes. I make it through alive with only two lowly beers inside. That Which Should Not Be Said remains unspoken. I know everyone I speak to will still be speaking to me in the morning. That is motivation in and of itself. I won’t pay with a sick head and heart in the morning, for once. That cost is high and, for now, my pockets are empty.

—Ayn Imperato

Ayn Imperato



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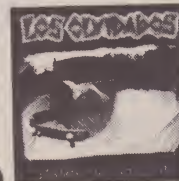
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That Iron String

I hereby resign from the Smart People's Club.

"People are stupid." Oh yeah, I sang that tune. Off-key, but with conviction. I believed it, I wrote about it, and I talked about it at great length. It got to the point where I didn't even think about it before saying it. Everywhere I looked, I found ample evidence that the human race was supremely, obscenely, magnificently fucking stupid. And I looked hard.

Of course, I had to accept that I was a member of the human race. But I wasn't stupid. No, I was smarter. Now *that* line of thinking was stupid. It took me far too long to learn it, but that smugness caused me to isolate myself among people who I considered to be smart. We were the brainy ones. We were the ones with common sense. We were the exception to the rule. And we all more or less thought alike. Some of my friends took this to the extreme; they narrowed their genuine human contact down to their girlfriends or boyfriends, husbands or wives. It was them against the world. I don't think they realized that the world didn't care; I'm convinced they didn't realize that they were wasting away in their relationships. Those relationships always seem to end with one or both of the parties coming to the conclusion that the other person was an idiot all along, and that they just didn't see it until the moment just prior to the break-up. As for me, I didn't think too much about the fact that others — not just the ones I considered to be idiots either — quite probably thought of myself and the little group of geniuses I called friends to be the stupid ones, even when we were displaying our stupidity with conviction and pride; a mind of arrogance is a mind of denial. When I finally did start thinking about it — just a little bit at first, then, slowly, a little more — I started to recognize the inherent insanity in my worldview.

So this craziness — not shooting-somebody-in-the-head craziness or abandoning-your-baby-in-

or flying-passenger-airplanes-into-buildings craziness — but dangerous craziness nonetheless, began to lose its appeal. I started seeing that if I were really all that smart, I'd realize how dumb I was. I began to understand that if I were genuinely smart, it would follow that my shit would be together, or at the very least, that I'd be happy. But the best I hoped for were brief moments of happiness. I'm fairly sure I actually once wrote and

true, but it missed the bigger picture. It was a nihilistic worldview. I don't know if I would've characterized it as such at the time; I probably would've just said that it was simply reality. I was wrong. Life is indeed inherently miserable, in that we're all going to experience suffering of varying degrees, that we're all going to get sick and that we're all going to die — no exceptions for the so-called smart people. But life also offers

So I asked myself what made me smarter, different, better? Was it the accumulation of a few ultimately meaningless pieces of information? A mouth quicker than my brain? The fact that I hadn't had to answer to a real boss since 1991? Those could all quite easily be the attributes of a hope-to-die junkie or a housewife anesthetizing herself with alcohol. I had to face the fact that I really didn't know much of anything about what was really important to me: some happiness and peace of mind. Because I hadn't known anything about them, I'd declared these things to be unattainable. I had sneered at those who spoke of seeking happiness and peace of mind with a special kind of cynicism utilized by the Sour Grapes Brigade.

Coming to this realization — and I don't even like using that word because I don't feel that finally taking note of the obvious should qualify as a realization — didn't happen overnight. It took years, and in particular, the past seven years. I am a very slow learner.

For instance, when my wife left me, I drugged around merrily in self-pity. I was so into feeling miserable that I didn't even drink for several months — I wanted my misery to be pure; becoming a drunken stereotype might've earned me more pity but I felt it would cheapen the purity of my wallowing. What a waste! I ran over The List in my head night and day. You know The List — the one that details all the fucked up things your ex did, all of his or her faults, the way he or she left you, the goddamned unfairness of it all. My righteous anger found its way into my dreams. And of course it started driving me nuts that she was occupying my thoughts; hadn't I suffered enough without having to deal with the seemingly endless recitation of The List? But who was pouring the salt into my wounds? Not her. I was torturing myself. This is not smart behavior.

At first I didn't want to hate her



"Imitation is suicide." —Self-Reliance
Ralph Waldo Emerson

published something to the effect of, "Life is misery made bearable only by rare moments of genuine bliss," though I probably didn't put it quite so eloquently. In fact, I think I used an analogy of an occasional donut floating in a sea of snot. What I wrote then was *sort of*

an opportunity to transform that inherent misery — not eradicate it, but transform it — into something that gives real meaning and purpose to life and that creates a stable happiness and peace. You can't see that if you've turned nihilism into your religion.

for the childish reason — she wasn't deserving of the effort of my emotions. Once that quiet tantrum had passed, I genuinely just wanted peace of mind. But as much as I didn't want to hate her — for some good, positive reasons — I didn't want it badly enough to let go of my hate. Let go of your hate, end of problem. Seems simple enough. Obvious. So why did it take me so long?

In daily life I try to put common sense into practice when dealing with others. It's more difficult than it sounds. I succumb too easily to righteous anger, and justified anger is the worst, most destructive kind of anger: people who owe me money — the ones who have made more money off of my work than I have — who are completely comfortable with the idea of paying me when they feel like it, if at all; contract negotiations between crooked lawyers for whose services we're paying \$350 an hour; somebody steals the windows out of my car; and muggings in my neighborhood. The muggers don't even have the decency to threaten people. They just pound them in the face and head repeatedly and take their money. You have to do your business. You have to be tough sometimes. You have to do what you can to earn a living and you have to do what you can to avoid theft and violence. But you don't have to let all of that wind you up. You don't have to follow your justified anger to the place it always leads you, to its logical end — misery.

I try to see things from another point of view but the world moves fast and I find myself shooting first and asking questions later. It seems, on the surface, like rational self-preservation but if I dig a little deeper I find that it's really just an unwillingness to put the effort into stepping back from my concept of my importance in the world. On those rare occasions when I can do so, I realize that nothing is as big of a deal as I'm making it out to be in my mind, ostensibly for my own benefit. If reacting in normal, accepted ways is the correct route to take, why am I never satisfied with the results?

The fucked-up nature of the world is an excellent excuse for forgetting that you know there's a better way to deal with things, but it's still just an excuse. So I tell myself, okay, grasshopper, go out into the world and shatter your delusions. Find peace and happiness. You know how to do it, so do it.

And then:

Planes being flown into buildings full of people like something out of a Hollywood summer blockbuster. I didn't realize how many people I knew who lived or worked in Manhattan. My old pal Jon has been doing some work at the Pentagon lately. Was he there when the plane hit? I haven't talked to him in a couple of months. After three days, the good people, the smart people, the people who matter in my little universe are all alive and accounted for. But I'm feeling a white-hot, murderous hatred. Bomb now and ask questions later. And suddenly, I have a lot in common with those who have wronged me, and those I imagine have wronged me. Hand in hand, the smart and the dumb are demanding vengeance, united by a righteous, blind rage. And I realize that something is seriously wrong with me if the only thing that will bring me together with my fellow man is a shared

blood lust. The enemy of my enemy is my friend... And I wonder if my gut reactions will ever change. Talk is cheap. What's your initial reaction, not in a college classroom or behind a computer screen where you can dissect the situation with an intellectual barricade of smart, quick-talking debates, but in your heart where it's raw and it's right fucking now?

I look into my heart and see fear and hatred. So I sit alone and I practice meditation on love and compassion, and I feel it in my heart and in my mind and body. It's beautiful and true but it means nothing without practical application. I hope I'm smart enough to take what's in my heart now out of the safety of the meditation and genuinely live that love and compassion so that my gut reactions change; so that I find some happiness and peace. I don't believe that the best I can hope for is occasional, fleeting moments of joy. I don't believe it anymore. I believe that happiness is attainable. It just takes consistent effort. It's a simple matter of ending habitual behavior that brings you misery, and actively engaging in behavior that brings you happiness. Yeah, a simple matter. Real simple...

I would like to use my time wisely. The arguments I've had, the grudges I've held, the shit I've talked — what an enormous waste of time. The notoriety I've gained means nothing compared to a simple "thank you" for writing a song that made a little bit of a difference in someone's life. It's more powerful, and it's far more true.

I do not want to die still running around looking for happiness, peace and contentment like a dog chasing its own tail. In *Self-Reliance*, Ralph Waldo Emerson tells us that imitation is suicide. Maybe things aren't all that different than they were in Emerson's time, but as a product of this culture, I can't help but think that now more than ever we need to heed those words. Imitation is suicide. How many genuinely happy, peaceful people do you know? Do you know anyone who doesn't suffer? Could we be on the wrong track? Could the endless pursuit of happiness through all the normal channels be a cruel hallucination that tells us comforting lies and then turns and laughs in our face as we exhale our last breath?

I hereby resign from the Smart People's Club; I've decided we're a bunch of blowhards who don't really know anything. I want something more than a cheap, easy answer because tornados, earthquakes, hurricanes and floods seem positively charming when faced with drunk drivers, polluted water, genetically modified food, errant bullets from the guns of crack heads, passenger jets flying into buildings, anthrax in your mailbox, and the government's assurances that we will indeed be subjected to more terrorist attacks and that there's nothing we can do about it — no safety. Well that was the truth all along.

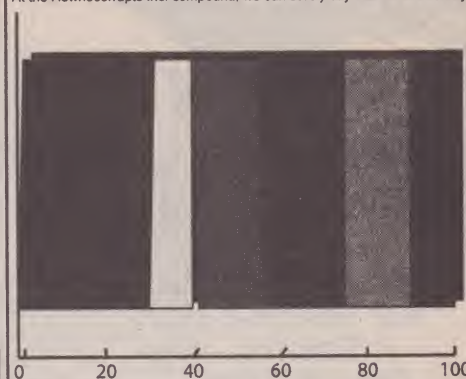
Time moves very fast. We have 60, 70, 80 years on this earth if we're lucky. It's very little time. It's precious time. I can't kill it anymore.

-Ben Weasel

I can be contacted via
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The Discovery of America (Part V - Final Chapter)

The Promised Land of the Punks

For the first time in weeks, Spike's cell phone rang. The phone had been placed on a rock in the shadow of a larger rock. Spike did not want to answer it. He was totally depressed and he did not want to deal with more bad news. Nimrod was still missing. Suzy Swallow was still dead. But he didn't want to look like a pussy in front of his brothers, so he picked up the phone and held it to his ear as if it were a black scorpion, fearful of what new pain contact with the outside world might bring.

It was Jimmy, and Jimmy said: "You got a gig tonight."

Spike asked where the gig was. Jimmy told him and hung up the phone.

Spike gathered his vanmates together and told them the news:

"Brothers, we have a gig tonight in The Promised Land of the Punks."

The members of The Defeated cheered with one voice. They gave glory to Jimmy. They gave even more glory to Spike. But they gave the most glory of all to Punk Rock, and this is exactly as it should have been.

Spike and the members of The Defeated, minus those who were traveling with them, shrugged off their sadness and piled into the van. Spike worried, briefly, about what the Unhappy Dude had told him about Jimmy, but he managed to put his fear, or at least most of it, out of his mind.

They took on provisions for the last leg of their trip at a 7-11. Then they pointed their van in the direction of The Promised Land of the Punks and chased the setting sun. As the evening drew on, a great fog enveloped them, so that they could hardly see, and this gave Spike a bad feeling.

Spike said to his brothers:

RAZORCAKE 14 "Do you know

what this fog is?"

The brothers replied:

"What is it?"

Then Spike said:

"This fog is a symbol of the dangers ahead. It blinds us, conjuring up illusions of fame, wealth and limber women with few scruples, but beware, there are hardships yet ahead."

The members of The Defeated murmured their "okays" and "whatevers," wondering aloud why Spike was always trying to bring them down.

"Sometimes fog is just condensed water vapor that limits visibility," opined Wienie Todd.

Then the fog dissipated and a strange and wonderful light shone all around the van and rendered its occupants speechless.

They found themselves crawling along a crowded freeway. Palm trees hung in the sky like moldering props of exploded fireworks. Mort and Measles "oohed" and "aahed" at every turn. The sun hid in veil of haze. The light seemed to come from everywhere at once. The streets were as cracked and pitted as a neglected pool, and EDPs (emotionally disturbed persons) stood at every corner, howling in demented fury.

"Hollywood," Spike said, "The Promised Land of the Punks"

They drove around all afternoon, passing famous landmarks of Punk Rock's past. They passed the spots where Iggy Pop scored ludes, Darby Crash copped blowjobs, and Belinda Carlisle fucked just about everybody. They passed basement rehearsal spaces, back alley bars and rundown restaurants where LA bands first gave glory to Punk Rock. They cruised past the parking lots where punk rockers got their heads kicked in by cops. From the suburban beaches to the downtown boulevards, the San Fernando Valley to the South Bay, they passed all the famous landmarks of the Promised Land of the Punks, but they knew it not for they had all been torn down to make room for mini-malls.

The van lurched to a stop. A drunken thing had staggered into the road. Its wig was cockeyed, its mascara smeared.

Jonaz, the violence enthusiast,

took matters into his own hands:

"Get out of the road, you freak-ing freak."

The freak regaled the punk rockers with a flurry of epithets. The freak shook its dainty first. The freak splattered all over the windshield of a bus plowing through the intersection at great speed.

Looks Like Shit + Smells Like Shit=Shit

After spending many hours looking for a parking place, The Defeated disembarked the van and approached the club where Jimmy had arranged for them to play. It was called The Trap Door.

Nimrod met them at the door, but he did not look like the Nimrod of old. His hair was clean and styled with gel, and the tips had been bleached blond. He wore black shoes with clean socks, freshly pressed pants and a button-down shirt with a (gasp!) collar and adorned with a curious piece of patterned fabric that was knotted at the neck and hung down to his belt.

"What is that thing?" Measles asked Morty.

"I don't know," Measles replied, "but it looks like it hurts."

Nimrod addressed this old vanmates.

"Greetings, brothers! How good it is to see you here!"

Spike returned the greeting. He was happy to see Nimrod, but he was cautious, wary, anxious, skeptical and in the mood for a cup of non-fat yogurt.

"It is good to see you Nimrod. How did you come to this place?"

Nimrod answered.

"I do not wish to be called that name anymore. That part of my life is over. A new life has begun. You see, I wandered in the desert for forty minutes and forty seconds. I thought I was going to die, when I was picked up by a kind-hearted gentleman in a black helicopter, who brought me here and gave me a job managing his club. Is that rad or what?"

The members of The Defeated murmured amongst themselves, agreeing that it was indeed pretty rad.

"Excuse me, Nimrod" Spike

said. "Did you say 'black helicopter'?"

"I did," Nimrod answered. "And it's Trevor. My name is Trevor."

The bad feeling Spike had been carrying around got a little worse.

"Okay then, Trevor, we are here to unleash Punk Rock upon The Promised Land of the Saints!"

Trevor frowned.

"I'm afraid there's been a mix-up."

Spike replied:

"A mix-up? I don't understand. Jimmy said we were playing here tonight. Is this not true?"

Trevor smiled easily.

"Yes, it's true, or at least mostly true. You are playing, just not here, and not tonight. I can explain."

And explain he did. The Defeated were scheduled to play later that week at a smaller club off the strip. They would be issued tickets, which they would have to sell in advance. If they did not sell these tickets, the band would have to buy them, or they would not be permitted to play.

"That blows," Morty said.

"Sorry," Trevor said, "but that's the way it goes."

"Yeah," Measles added, with a scowl befitting his angry mood and worsening temper, "but it still blows."

The Not-So-Promising Land of the Punks

The asshole formerly known as Nimrod rescheduled. The Defeated's debut in The Promised Land of the Punks for Monday night at the Carpet Club, an alternative lifestyle café in West Hollywood with organic coffee, non dairy scones and a tiny performance space.

The night before the show Spike and Seany Rock went to check out the venue and post some flyers. A mannish-looking woman wearing bib overalls and a crew cut mangled Gospel songs on an acoustic guitar.

Seany said:

"This place sucks."

Spike replied:

"Verily."

Seany asked:

"What is that under the performer's armpits?"

To which Spike replied:

"Either it is a rare species of rodent, or five years worth of underarm growth. Alas, I cannot say which."

Seany, who in the course of the last three months and witnessed infected boils, infested bedrolls and woefully neglected undergarments, recoiled in horror and secret fascination.

"Say it isn't so."

Spike answered:

"It is so."

Seany replied:

"Gnarly."

Measles & Morty's Big Adventure

While The Defeated waited to play, the members of the band dispersed to explore The Promised Land of the Punks, each according to his own wants and needs.

Measles and Morty went in search of punk rock pleasure. They walked down Hollywood Boulevard like they owned it. They sparechanged passersbys until they had enough money for a bottle of Good Times. At the cynosure of Hollywood and Vine they reveled in unusually strong vibrations. It was a great fucking day, so, of course, Morty had to go ahead and ruin it.

He said:

"I have a confession to make."

Measles took a pull on the bottle and passed it to Morty.

"I know," Measles said.

"You're gay. I've known for years."

To which Morty replied.

"No I'm not."

Measles answered:

"Dude," he continued, "it's okay. You don't have to hide anything from me. I'm not going to be, like, taking showers with you or anything, but you're still my friend."

"You don't take showers," Morty snapped.

Measles said:

"Whatever."

Measles reached for the bottle. Morty wouldn't give it to him.

"Not until I hear you say I'm not gay," he said.

Measles replied:

"Okay, you're not gay."

Morty gave up the bottle.

While Measles drank, Morty asked:

"Do you want to hear my confession or not?"

Measles answered:

"Yes."

Morty said:

"I lied to you about my favorite

band."

"You mean it's not Bastard Fuckchild?"

Morty answered that it was not.

"Goiterneck?"

"No."

"Slurm?"

"No."

"Who is it then?" Measles asked.

Morty replied:

"Cheap Trick."

Measles tilted the bottle and drained it.

"Dude," he said, "you are so gay."

True Love

Skeebo sought and found a strip club filled with misanthropic freaks.

Barrett bought a glass pipe and copped some speed at a hot dog stand.

Wienie Todd geeked out in a used record store.

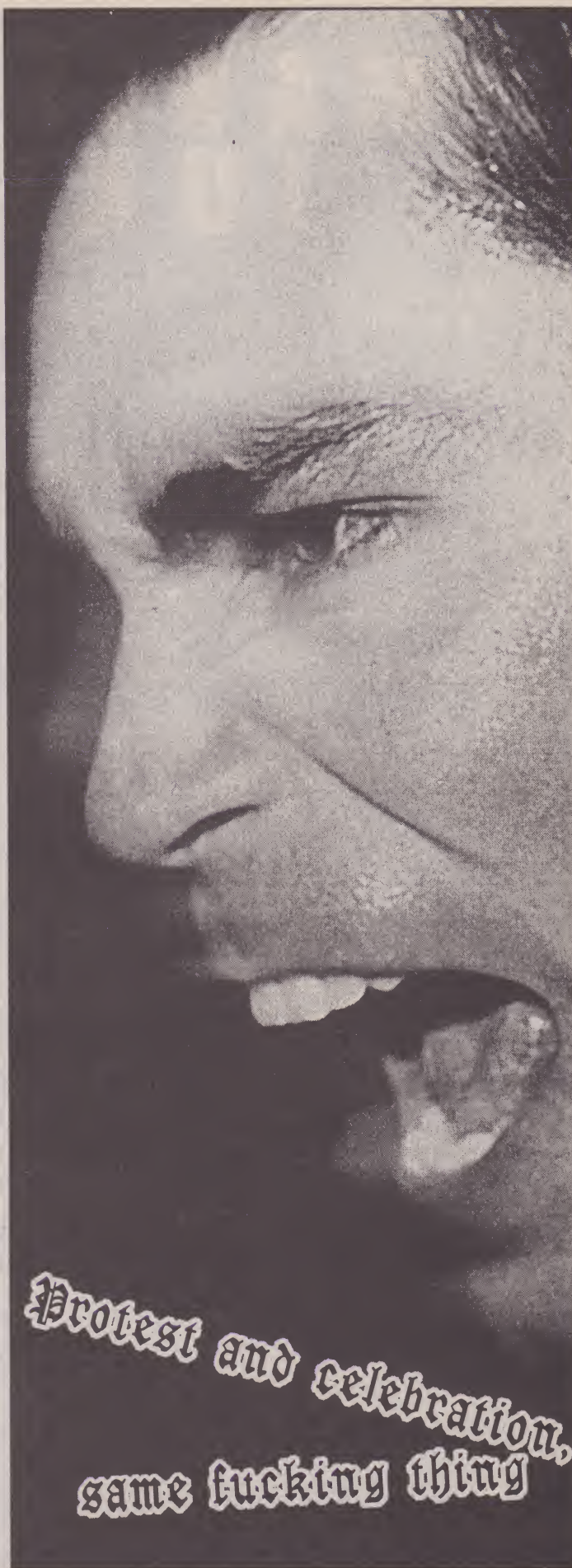
Jonaz picked fights with a department store security stiff, a bouncer and a Kinko's employee, and won.

Piker resumed his losing battle with the bottle. He learned to accept the demonic figures that assailed his peace of mind at every turn, peering at him from the recesses of dark alleys, huddled under freeway underpasses with a brace of shopping carts, gazing through the windows of city buses as they rumbled past. He went to an A.A. meeting, found God and lost him again in the narrow aisles of a corner liquor store. He paid ten dollars to get sucked off by a hollow-eyed runaway. He shot his load. The runaway puked on him, spat in his face. He smelled sulfur, tasted fire. He cuffed her bloody and collapsed in the shadow of a neglected palm tree.

Ape drove over to the Valley and went looking for salvage yards. He didn't find what he was looking for, but in Canoga Park he found a box of gay porno videos near a strip mall dumpster. He went back to West Hollywood and made enough money off the tapes to buy a new water pump for the van. There was a little left over so he sent his sweetheart back home a dozen red roses and a shiny Mylar balloon that said: *Besitos para mi amor.*

Where the White Foam Kissed His Feet

Of all the members of The Defeated, only Felch was happy to be in West Hollywood. Felch was a punk rocker first and foremost, but he was something else secondmost, and he'd had to suppress this other aspect of his selfhood for far too



Protest and celebration,
same fucking thing

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long. He was overjoyed to be amongst his own people. Unfortunately, these people did not feel the same way about Felch.

If he went into a bar, they refused him service on the basis of his youthful countenance and out-of-state ID. At coffee shops they asked Felch to sit outside, away from the other customers on account of his odor. Prissy little fags followed him around book stores to make sure he didn't steal anything. After dark on Santa Monica Boulevard he was accosted by cross-dressing street walkers who hissed at him to get his raggedy ass off their turf. Beautiful he-men muscled him off the sidewalk and into the street. No one loved him here. It was even worse than New Jersey.

He took a bus to Venice and went to the boardwalk to prowl for skank. Bad idea. All he saw was hippies and tourists. He felt anxious and sick, like he might puke up a hummingbird.

He went to the water's edge. He took off his boots and felt the pull of the tide at his ankles. I've never done this before, he thought. A breeze blew in from offshore, scattering the whitecaps, changing the shape of the waves. Birds combed the troughs — for what? A wave rose up and broke before the setting sun, transforming the wave into a prism, that inoculated him with dazzling rays before it was destroyed in the surf. Felch laughed and laughed and laughed.

"What's the big deal?" he asked aloud.

He tipped over a trash can and used the greasy paper fast food containers and twelve-pack boxes to start a fire. He felt warm, happy to be alive.

A young man walked into the firelight and sat down in the sand. He was astonishingly handsome.

"Hi," he said.

Felch, feeling lucky, took a chance. He said:

"You're a dirty little surfer boy, aren't you?"

The stranger replied with a smile.

"Yes," he said, "I am."

Life is easy, Felch thought, except for when it isn't.

A little Bit Farther \ South of the Promised Land

The members of The Defeated assembled on Monday night at the Carpet Club. The club's marquee read "Tonight: Toaster Coil with special guests."

Skeebo stared at the sign. It confused him mightily.

He said:

"Who's Toaster Coil?"

Seany responded.

"Who gives a fuck?! We're 'special guests!' I thought we were opening!"

He was mightily pissed off.

Spike shook his head. He said: "So did I."

They went inside. The club was a shambles. The room was cluttered with tables and chairs. The remains of a party — a private bridal bash — was in evidence everywhere. Platoons of empty wine cooler bottles and spent cans of whipped cream bedecked the tables.

Measles said:

"Man, those kitty kissers know how to party!"

Spike instructed the merch gang to help clean up and clear out all the tables and chairs. The rest of the band loaded in and set up their equipment. There was no stage. They set up between the condiment bar and a magazine rack. Around eight o'clock, customers started trickling in. They saw Spike and those who traveled with him setting up, and they became very angry. It seems Monday night was open mic night for amateur comediennees, only no had told the comediennees. They were extremely aggravated. Seany Rock chased them off.

When the last of the humorless comediennees was gone, Spike called the asshole formerly known as Nimrod on his cell phone and asked to speak with Jimmy. The asshole formerly known as Nimrod informed Spike that Jimmy wanted nothing more to do with Spike and The Defeated. He told Spike that Jimmy had shelled out close to thirty grand in getting The Defeated to The Promised Land of the Punks, a sum that the band was legally liable for and would have to pay.

Spike said:

"What?"

The asshole formerly known as Nimrod said:

"Drugs, food, wireless phone service. Those Dial-A-Fuck calls really add up, Spike."

"Yes, well, I see," Spike sputtered. "What exactly does that mean?"

"It means," the asshole formerly known as Nimrod answered, "you've blown your entire budget on speed, burritos and phone sex. It means you're going to have to record, press, distribute and promote the record yourself with the money you have left."

Spike fought off the urge to soil himself.

"Record? What record?"

"You signed a contract, remember?"

Spike vaguely recollected his first meeting with Jimmy in a backwater bar on the Jersey shore. He recalled a bottle that was neither

whiskey nor wine but came with a cork. He remembered Jimmy had given him a thin gold pen, which he promptly pawned the next day. The pen was practically brand new. He'd only used it once. Oh, yeah.

The contract.

Spike said:

"I see."

The asshole formerly known as Nimrod said:

"I'm not sure you do. I should have killed you when I had the chance."

Spike said:

"What?"

The asshole formerly known as Nimrod replied:

"Nothing. I always wanted to say that."

Spiked ended the call and dropped the phone in a pitcher of beer. He never wanted to talk to the asshole formerly known as Nimrod again.

Seany Rock approached him:

"What do we do?" he asked.

Spike answered:

"We're going to do what we came here to do. We are going to give glory to Punk Rock! Are you with me?!"

The men of The Defeated gave forth a thunderous shout, and then they gave glory to Punk Rock with everything they had — the only way the knew how — even though no one, not a single soul, came to see them play.

The 1467.98 th Happiest Place on Earth

After their set, Spike gathered The Defeated in the parking lot behind the Carpet Club. He said:

"Brothers, we have come to a desperate pass. Jimmy has forsaken us. We are out of money.

The Promised Land of the Punks sucks big time. Tomorrow we will pool our resources and go home. We were promised many things, and none of them came true, and for that I, and I alone, am responsible. We have learned much in the course of our discovery of America. We learned that Piker is weird drunk, Measles' breath smells like ass and Felch likes boys. Hopefully we've each learned things about ourselves and those discoveries will not be in vain."

The punk rockers from New Jersey hung their heads. Some were sad, some were agitated, some were utterly defeated.

They piled into the van and

headed south.

And lo they came unto Anaheim, home of Disneyland, a place much loved in the imagination of unimaginative people all over the world.

Skeebo said:

"Spike, ever since I was a small boy, it has been a dream of mine to go to Disneyland. If I can just get a glimpse of it, I will not feel like such a failure. My life, such as it is, will be complete."

Spike reflected on Skeebo's words. He had long regarded Skeebo as a mildly retarded species of punk rocker. However, he'd been uncharacteristically eloquent, and his words moved him.

"Okay," he said. "Let's go to Disneyland."

They arrived many hours in advance of the park's opening, so they fortified the van with canned beer and speed procured, ironically enough, at a SpeedMart.

When dawn broke, the van was quiet, everyone had passed out drunk, except for Skeebo and Barrett, who were totally sketched. Skeebo doodled concepts for a Mickey Mouse tattoo while Barrett composed a letter to his dead mother.

At the appointed hour they stumbled out of the van and headed for the park entrance.

Jonaz, the violence enthusiast, halted. He said:

"I can't do it."

Spike asked:

"Why not?"

Jonaz, the violence enthusiast, answered:

"I gave four years of part-time employment to Check E. Cheese. It may sound silly, but I wore the uniform with pride. I made people happy. It was my only time in my life that I have known love."

Measles interrupted:

"Dude, you worked at Chuck E. Cheese? That is so lame!"

Jonaz, the violence enthusiast, responded:

"Shut up, Measles, or I'll fucking kill you."

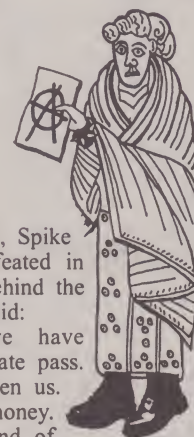
Measles continued taunting him:

"Go for it, Chuckles. Come on. Are you a man or a mouse? Squeak squeak!"

Spike, Seany, Piker and Ape spent several minutes tried to subdue the violence enthusiast. Their adventure at the Happiest Place on Earth was getting off to an inauspicious start. When Measles had been muzzled, and calm had been restored, Jonaz, the violence enthusiast, continued:

"For me, there can only be one über mouse."

Spike answered: **RAZORCAKE** 17



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"Methinks your devotion to icons of corporate consumerism is misplaced, but I respect your wishes."

Spike and those that traveled with him crossed the parking lot to the park gates. They waited in line exactly two minutes when they were accosted — there is no other word for it — by numerous men in bright windbreakers emblazoned with a logo that featured the Magic Castle.

One of the security guards addressed Spike: "Step out of the line, please."

Spike responded:

"Why?"

The goon responded:

"You will not be admitted to the park today. Not dressed like that."

Spike stood his ground:

"This is discrimination. This is America. You can't discriminate people in America."

Many days later, while retelling the story of the fascist policies at Disneyland, it will occur to him that the history of America could be viewed as a chronicle of discrimination between those who controlled exploitable commodities and those who did not. Verily, many of the have nots were themselves exploitable commodities. This epiphany saddened him, but at the moment, he was feeling rather impotent.

"Sir," the pseudo-cop said, his bristly mustache twitching, "I believe you to be intoxicated. Either you can leave peaceably, or I can call the police."

Spike sighed. He supposed he should feel anger, indignation, even rage, but all he could muster was disappointment. He deeply regretted his decision to excuse Jonaz, the violence enthusiast, from the day's festivities. His single-mindedness would be useful right now. He said:

"Okay then."

One by one The Defeated stepped out of line. They headed back to the van with the knowledge that it was going to be a bad day, and it wasn't even eight o'clock yet.

"Excuse me, are you Spike?"

Spike looked to see who was asking. It was a punk rocker. She wore red pants, a white wifebeater and blue creepers. Her hair was pulled back in braids. She had big eyes, large lips and a spectacular rack. She was astonishingly cute.

Spike answered:

"I am no other."

She said:

"Is this your band, The Defeated?"

Spike replied:

"It is. You've heard of us?"

"Shit yeah!" she said. "Look..."

She withdrew a CD from her purse. It was The Swallows newest release. She opened the CD and read from the liner notes:

"This album is dedicated to The Defeated, the best punk rock band in America.' It says here a lot of the songs were inspired by you. Were you two lovers or something?"

"Or something," Spike said. "When did this come out?"

"Yesterday. When are you playing next? I'm dying to hear you!"

Spike answered:

"We are, um, between gigs."

"I'm having a party at my house tonight. Do you want to play?"

"Shit yeah," he said. Something interesting was happening here. Life suddenly seemed not to suck so much.

A Frangible Thing

Spike followed the punk rockers directions and found the party. They set up, plugged in, and played. It was easily their best show, their finest hour. Everything felt right. Their music made sense here in these crowded, smoke-filled rooms with spilled beer on the floor and shipwrecked punk rockers passed out here and there.

After their set, Spike was hugged, shoved and subjected to boozy embraces. People spilled things on him, gave him drinks, proffered pills. There were punk rock chicks everywhere, and they were all beautiful in their own fashion.

Another band was setting up. They had played hours earlier and had been urged, nay coerced, to play again.

Spike brushed up against someone's ass. The woman turned and Spike saw that it was the punk rocker he had met in the Disneyland parking lot.

"You guys were great!" she said. "You have given much glory to Punk Rock!"

Spike thanked her.

She went on:

"I was talking to Seany Rock. He said you're going back to New Jersey?"

Spike nodded.

"That was the plan."

She continued:

"You should stay. There are lots of places to play down here. You so fit in. The scene is different here. Punk rock may have been invented elsewhere, but this is where it lives and breathes."

She touched his chest. Little explosions went off in there. There was a demolition crew. Light ordnance. Things collapsing, falling down, clearing the way for something new. He looked into her eyes and found he could not break her gaze. Something was being communicated, and he knew exactly what it was. He had never felt more certain about anything in his life. He said:

"I think we'll stick around a while."

The band launched into their second set and the room exploded. The party went from a place where people stood around smugly telling each other lies to the re-enactment of a cyclone with humans playing the part of wind, force and fury. A dozen drinks went airborne. People crashed into the room from every doorway. They'd smash glass, climb through windows to get inside. They surged toward the stage. If someone fell over an amp, tripped over the mic chord, or knocked over the cymbal stand as they scrambled to regain their footing, it was okay. A hand reached out to steady an errant torso or wobbly mic stand. If the singer stopped singing to take a drink, no big deal, the people in the crowd knew the words. The members of The Defeated were all goofy smiles and fuck yeahs. This was the punk rock moment they had been waiting for, and they were all equally entitled to it. No one was excluded because no one was anything. No one was this way or that way. Boy or girl, gay or straight, sideways or sober. Each of them experienced a negation of identity, the joyful and spontaneous annihilation of self. Life was a fucking bore filled with people who had all but forsaken their humanity. Stupid teachers and soulless bosses. Girlfriends who wanted to break their balls, boyfriends who didn't have any. Kids who took without ever giving anything back and parents who withheld their love. The same asshole in numerous guises always trying to change who and what they were. Sometimes they succeeded in turning them into something very un-punk rock until one day they looked in the mirror and could not recognize the person peering back. The music was a vital reminder that the transmutation was only temporary. What caused it? None of them could say. It was part alcohol, part amplifier, part animal exuberance. Protest and celebration, same fucking thing. Whatever did not lead to this moment was of zero consequence. Now was all that mattered. The time to observe had passed. Reflection would come later. There was only the music. They didn't just listen to it, they entered it, hurled themselves at it like something blasted out of a cannon. Only a dipshit would call it dancing. Spike and those traveling with him celebrated this new discovery that was not a discovery at all but the resuscitation of something vital, essential, necessary for human life. They didn't make the music, but it was their noise, theirs to revel in, each according to their own wants and needs, and none of them would ever be the same again.



Rich Mackin

The Twisted Balloon



My favorite chant this weekend was actually the five minutes of Black Bloc kids chanting "Whose big fucking pointy thing? OUR big fucking pointy thing!" at the Washington Monument.

Rich Mackin

First of all, this is *not* going to be objective journalism. Heck, I don't believe there's such a thing. Sure, many strive for it, but to say you have no feelings about something means you aren't human. I choose to bask in my humanity, not attempt to ignore it. If you think Dan Rather doesn't consider the ties between who writes his paycheck and whom he reports on, think harder. Besides, it's my column and I get to write what I want. So nyah.

I spent the weekend in Washington D.C. at protests and rallies. The first protest was a Critical Mass-style bike ride on Friday, with a full day of activity on Saturday, and events going on through Monday afternoon. The funny thing is, I can hardly say myself how many actions I attended, as many of them ebbed and flowed into one another. I saw specific actions against the IMF and World Bank, talked to people who rode in an anti-School of the Americas bike ride, witnessed rallies for the people of Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia, Palestine, and the Philippines, and others against Coca-Cola, Monsanto, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon, the Bush Administration, and the so-called "War on Terrorism."

Ironically, this is only a few months after the World Economic Forum protests in NYC provoked critical backlash for being disjointed (at least from the less political punks I talked to). To many, what should have been shown as one message seems scattered with references to Enron and the now ubiquitous protest icon Mumia Abu Jamal, whose plight is brought up seemingly randomly in any protest. It's not that I don't support the Mumia movement, just that I don't know if an anti-bioengineering event is the place to bring it up. At least "Free Mumia" signs were conspicuously absent in DC this time. The former is simply one example of corporate crime that the WEF critics showcased, while the other is a symptom of any large gathering — whatever the point of the actual event. If attention is to be had, someone will find a way to exploit it for a cause, related or not. Consider if John 3:16 has any direct connection to any sports venue or rainbow wigs*, for instance. Furthermore, the whole concept of the World Economic Forum is pretty unknown to the average American, who is unaware that the heads of major corporations and other financially powerful figures have such networking conferences at all. Certainly, the media owned by these companies wasn't going to explore how the meetings usually happen in Switzerland and were allegedly driven out by mass protests, landing in NYC where 9-11 RAZORCAKE 20 aftermath and emotions were

everywhere. The average Nike-wearing, Budweiser-drinking Joe had a fleeting glimpse into another Seattle-type thing where kids with bandanas decry capitalism in the city that was barely beginning the healing process to the largest wound in our collective history. No wonder people were quick to look for inconsistencies. But isn't the blame more accurately put on those who organized the protest-inspiring event? Before someone complains about people protesting something, shouldn't there be at least some curiosity to what the thing is?

Then again, the last time I was in DC, I was in the Smithsonian Institute and watched kids on a field trip ask each other what a display was. Rather than walk two feet and look at the placard, if they couldn't guess what it was, it was deemed "stupid." Why would I be surprised when people think protesters protest just to protest? Why would an American go out of one's way to ask an informed person of something when it's easier to just assume they need a job?

From April 19-21 our nation's capitol was abuzz with activity which came across not as disjointed, but more like many pieces being assembled into a single puzzle, bricks being built into one wall. Sure, the signs mentioned any number of subjects, but there was an underlying theme to this all.

For one, the simple fact that there is strength in numbers. Solidarity was the theme of the weekend. People who are unhappy with the system stood together, supporting one another's causes. For another, there was networking. Protests have become a social thing, and while this means fun and making new friends, it is also a gathering of like-minded people who can share their personal causes with one another. While many people were arguably protesting for the sake and rush of protesting itself, much of this weekend was the joining of people with mutual goals and mutual enemies. If the problems being brought up were so diverse, it is only because we live in a system that creates so many problems. I encourage readers to research these topics on their own. I cannot do justice if I try to explain WTO, IMF and numerous activist causes in one article, and by all means, don't take my word for anything besides what I say I saw with my own eyes. However, for some sense of clarity, the point of this weekend's events was something like this...

America's government, represented by the unelected George W. Bush, is heavily influenced by corporate powers. So, we already have some people upset at the selling out of our so-called "democracy," catering to financial

influence. The fact that the corporations allegedly running things are those like Enron (need I say more), Coke (who sells an unhealthy product and is charged in any number of human rights scandals), Monsanto (who are behind much of the world's bioengineering and other controversial issues), Phillip Morris (whose most well-known product kills those who use it as directed, while Phillip Morris makes incorrect statements that people dying save governments money), and Shell (which has been flat out accused of murdering activists such as Ken Saro-Wiwa in Nigeria). These companies have further influence over politics through organizations such as the IMF and World Bank. As a result of such influence or not, the U.S. has a strong military and cultural (if McDonalds can be called culture) presence in many countries, and this is part of what upsets groups like the Taliban (even though they had no problem taking our money in recent years to combat that other abstract war — the one on drugs).

So we were attacked, and we retaliated by bombing Afghanistan, despite the fact that most of the terrorists involved were Saudi Arabian. Or the fact that we didn't bomb Montana when McVeigh blew up a building, or the fact that war means killing innocents, which is supposedly the sort of thing the terrorism we are fighting does. Or the fact that the School of the Americas (although recently renamed) is alleged to be little more than a terrorist training program. Or, in a half-assed simplification, America means corporations and military power that hurts people all over the world, and this upsets many people for many reasons. Toss in the American government's support of Israeli leader Sharon's occupation of Palestine, and you have tens of thousands of people rallying together. "People are starting come together to see that these things are all linked," summarized Beverly, a member of Act Now to Stop War and End Racism (ANSWER).

The exact number of people protesting is hard to say. After all, there were people coming and going over the weekend, and indeed there were separate rallies all over downtown Washington. (Including the counter protest, "Rally for America," featuring many militia and super-patriot types, as well as unrelated rallies against eating disorders and the inevitable "4:20" crowd.) The point that was made again and again, by every activist and even the counter-protesters I talked to, is that while there were so many causes, they all joined together at 3 PM for a single mass march, which police estimates say involved 75,000 people. From the vantage of the next street over, I rode my bike from the Washington Monument to the Capitol

Building, and there was a solid wall of people the whole way.

This was the first time I attended such an event as a journalist. I enjoyed this because it gave me reason and legitimacy to approach strangers to ask them questions. I got to talk to the crackpot with the anti-circumcision sign laden with fascist propaganda. (He was comparing circumcision to the holocaust, I guess.) I talked to a patriot from a right wing, anti-tyranny group who seemed as much an anarchist as anyone, just that he labeled himself conservative and not liberal. An old woman from Palestine cried to me about her loved ones being bombed. I got to talk to preppies in khakis who swear the system works, and that capitalism and democracy are the same. AND I HAVE IT ALL ON TAPE!

While differences were put aside for the actual marches, there were still differences. Among many Palestinians and Palestinian-Americans, it was hard to tell where anti-Sharon sentiment and anti-Zionist sentiment ended, and plain old anti-Semitism and racism began. While it's hard to fault anger in people whose immediate family are being murdered, and the concept of any given bad guy being "the next Hitler" is a recurring theme, the image of the swastika was used a bit too freely for the comfort of many, including many anti-racist activists and the group of Rabbis who marched in solidarity. Some activists sought to stand in unity with the Palestinians, but worried that they might be semi-endorsing nazis. Many people dislike what the government of Palestine does as much as they dislike Sharon, and it gets hard to communicate subtleties such as supporting the people of a country while downcrying the government in a three-line sign, soundbite or chant.

To many mainstream Americans, the protest movement is made up of nothing more than scruffy white kids. They were there, many from the Boston area. But not all these kids thought alike, and they kept their ideological boundaries up even in context of solidarity. Those who sought more "sanitary" protest chided members of the Black Bloc, the bandana-masked anarchist brigade, for (nonexistent) violence. I was unable to hear anything about any actual violence, but the Bloc has a reputation for such from mainstream media reports, and even some fellow activists buy into it. This weekend, anarchists were more likely spotted playing Frisbee and cooperative playground games. (My favorite chant this weekend was actually the five minutes of Black Bloc kids chanting "Whose big fucking pointy thing? OUR big fucking pointy thing!" at the Washington Monument.)

On Sunday, I watched an anarchist debate concerning some party members' love of Revolutionary Communist Party Chairman Bob Avakian. It was held by two college students who seemed unable (even after ten minutes) to explain how he became the group's leader or even why they like him. This was actually something I look back on a lot. Bob Avakian reminds me of a cross between L. Ron Hubbard and the pigs in *Animal Farm*. Like L. Ron, he says a lot of things that aren't so much wrong as they are bad rewrites of someone else's thoughts framed as if he is a brilliant visionary. RCP people talk like Catholics defending the inconsistencies of their faith — they believe in

The only people who seemed to be fully out of place were the undercover cops... Possibly because — new bandana and two days of stubble aside — the Starbucks cup is a dead giveaway.



this because this is what they believe in. I have maybe fifteen minutes of them babbling. (My RCP experience was further tainted by seeing RCP people show up at an anarchist house party and not pay at the door for the bands and house fund because of political differences. If that's the case, sure, don't give the anarchists money, but get your own free food and bands.)

Many activists of all creeds were wary of how much ANSWER actually did to help create this event and how much it merely was taking credit for the work of others, while others discussed ANSWER's often unspoken links to Socialist groups. Having witnessed these discussions firsthand, I realized that groups seemed to have more of a sense of apprehension about how each person was seen representing their own views, not in any sort of exclusionary "my rally/ your rally" tone.

The only people who seemed to be fully out of place were the undercover cops. Possibly because it's pretty obvious that a 40-year-old ex-football player isn't an anarchist, no matter what is hastily scrawled on his jacket. Possibly because — new bandana and two days of stubble aside — the Starbucks cup is a dead giveaway.

The official events being over for the day by Sunday afternoon, my friend Rosie and I biked about, searching for adventure (and the cute boy she met earlier). I endorse, if at all possible, the attending of protests and travel in general with bikes. It makes it easy to zip away, find a bathroom, and get back to what you were doing, and act as a messenger between front and end of a march. We rode past fellow activists and stopped to chat. Always one of the great parts of looking weird is the, "Hey, you look like we could be friends" reaction. They told us about a party featuring folk singer David Rovics.

Yeah, I am mentioning a folk singer in a

punk zine. Sorry. Actually, the issue Todd has with him is that after researching issue number seven's Ford piece, Todd found some fact garbling in Rovics's song "Henry Ford Was a Fascist." That aside, David is an amazing singer and songwriter, and it's nice to hear music without getting jumped on sometimes.

The show was actually at a house that was opened up to the public, with free food, no less. This capped off the weekend for me; such a huge sense of community and family. I mentioned that I wished I had some zines to give away. When asked, I explained my zine being a collection of funny letters to companies, provoking Rovics to ask me if I had heard of Rich Mackin. A few sentences later, I was reading to the crowd from the one stained copy of the zine I had on

me. It was neat. I got to contribute to the event instead of just eat free food.

So, as I write this back in my Boston apartment, overtired and with sore feet, I think of the chant "The people united can never be divided." I can't say for a fact if it's true or not, but it looks like the uniting part is well under way.

—Rich Mackin

Selected sources for more info on the actual points that were rallied for/against:

<http://www.globalizethis.org>

<http://www.A20StopTheWar.org/>

Or just look it up. You know how this stuff works I bet.

*for those not in the know, a man dubbed "Rainbow Head" for his clown wig would attend sports events with signs referring to the Bible verse "And God so loved the world..." He is referenced a lot in pop culture, and by now many of the references are third or fourth generation, hence Austin 3:16 in the WWE (formerly the WWF) and all.

Who Are You?



Nardwuar versus the Damned



Nardwuar: Who are you?

Dave Vanian: I have no idea.

Nardwuar: You're Dave Vanian of The Damned!

Captain Sensible: I'm Phil Collins and buy my records 'cause I need some hair restorer.

Nardwuar: You're Captain Sensible of The Damned!

Captain Sensible: Ahh, thank you. Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen. Buy my records. I need the money.

Nardwuar: Who else is in The Damned these days right now, Dave?

Dave Vanian: There's piles of them.

Nardwuar: What other people... come on, your wife (Damned bass player Patricia Morrison), your wife. Don't forget your wife!

Dave Vanian: Oh yeah right. He plays drums. His name's Mr. A. Pinch. He's from... I was gonna say Reservoir Dogs but...

Nardwuar: The English Dogs!

Dave Vanian: He's from The English Dogs. See, this man knows more about us 'cause we're actually imposters.

Nardwuar: Well, this is kinda what I want to learn more about.

Dave Vanian: Any minute now, it's all gonna be "Scooby dooby doo" and it all comes off [Dave pretends to take mask off] and I'm actually the caretaker!

Nardwuar: And who else is in the band, Captain Sensible? Please explain.

Captain Sensible: A friend of mine called Monty Oxy Moron playing keyboards. He's actually won awards for playing jazz. He was a jazz keyboard player the year of 19...?

Dave Vanian: '87.

Captain Sensible: Yeah... [laughs]... And now he has joined the Damned. So he's added a new dimension.

Nardwuar: He's a Punk Floydier isn't he?

Captain Sensible: Yeah, it's a good name for a band isn't it?

Nardwuar: So, Captain Sensible of The Damned, I understand you've got something to show us on the wall over here. This is a picture of your school. Could you please explain what this is all about.

Captain Sensible: [Looking at old photo of school kids] Well... uhhh... I was 'round me dad's and he was clearing some old junk out and amongst the garbage was this old photograph of this old school, Stanley Tech in South Norwood Hill, and I thought it would be fun to chuck it up on the website, <www.officialdammed.com>, and do a competition where if they can find where I am in the picture, I would give them a Hammond Organ 'cause I just recently moved into a flat and I haven't got much space, you see, so I need to get rid of it. So if anyone wants to win my Hammond Organ, they can pick me out of this rag bag of old toss-pots there.

Nardwuar: Dave, how do you feel about that,

giving away a vintage organ from the history of The Damned? What's the Captain doing?

Dave Vanian: Well, I'm surprised he isn't doing it for money, actually. Does it not work or something? [laughs]

Captain Sensible: No, it's all right. You occasionally have to fix it with an elastic band, you know, the tone wheels, but cut that bit out, it is in perfect working order! [laughs]

Nardwuar: Dave and Captain, it's great to have you back. Thanks for coming back together again, *Grave Disorder!*

Captain Sensible: [laughs] Fuck off!

Nardwuar: Yes, a brand new record, a brand new record together. [The Captain grabs and shakes Nardwuar] Now how long has it been there, Captain? How long has it been, Captain, since you guys did an album together? You got a brand new album out? How long has it been? Out come the bananas! [The Captain starts eating a banana]

Dave Vanian: Twelve years!

Nardwuar: Twelve years of rock. Now, you were almost lost to the Misfits there, weren't you Dave?

Dave Vanian: No.

Nardwuar: Did the Misfits approach you?

Dave Vanian: No.

Nardwuar: ...No?

Captain Sensible: Oh yes, they did! [laughs]

Nardwuar: Oh yes they did. Tell us, Captain!

Captain Sensible: I have absolutely no idea. I don't know what you're talking about.

Nardwuar: You were going to be singer of the Misfits for a little while, according to Jerry Only.

Captain Sensible: You'd better take that up with him then. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Ba-boom. Now let's move really forward to about two weeks ago. Guess who was in this very room? Billy...

Dave Vanian: Connelly.

Nardwuar: Billy I...

Dave Vanian: Billy I... I know. Billy I... have a fiver to give to Captain Sensible!

Nardwuar: That's what I was wondering. Do you have any good Billy Idol stories? He was just here at the Commodore Ballroom two weeks ago, Captain.

Captain Sensible: Yeah, he shagged Rat Scabies' missus. [laughs] When we was out on tour in the States, apparently he was seeing to Rat's missus while we were out working, you know. And when we got back - it was a terrible hoo-ha, actually. I remember whenever we went into a pub and the juke box had - I don't know - "White Wedding" or something. Yeah, I'd put "White Wedding" on and Rat would go "Oi! Turn that fucking shit off!" [laughs]

Nardwuar: Rat isn't here right now, but how would he react to the knowledge that The Clash played their first North American gig here, at the Commodore Ballroom in 1979, two years after you guys played New York? The Clash played

here, Dave. The Clash, where you're playing tonight!

Dave Vanian: You're a very excitable chap, aren't you? [laughs] Clash, yeah, fantastic.

Nardwuar: Just wondering if you have any Canadian connections? I want to bring out the Canadian connections.

Captain Sensible: We only came here a couple of times, that's the trouble. We came here once in '77 I think, and then there was a big gap before we came back.

Nardwuar: I thought you didn't really come to Canada until you came to the El Mocambo in Toronto, in the early '80s when you destroyed the El Mocambo's sign. Do you remember that at all Captain Sensible?

Captain Sensible: [Silence then banana-eating noises]... To be quite honest, I don't remember much about anything really, because my brain was usually addled with drink and drugs. There you go.

Nardwuar: Dave, you like Donald Sutherland though. He's a Canadian.

Dave Vanian: He is a Canadian. Yeah, he's done some good films.

Nardwuar: Do have any Canadian connections? Are there any Canadian connections at all for you guys in the Damned?

Dave Vanian: We don't, do we? None that I can think of, have we?

Captain Sensible: I have a particular hating of Molson beer, does that count?

Nardwuar: That's kind of Canadian. Billy Cowsill, he lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. CS and...

Dave Vanian: Ahh, yeah!

Captain Sensible: The Cowsills, yeah! [sings] "The rain, the park and other things, ta-da ta-da, da-da da-da..."

Nardwuar: What's Captain Sensible's obsession with Billy Cowsill there?

Dave Vanian: He loves the Cowsills.

Captain Sensible: They're an exceedingly good band and I think a Cowsill revival would be long overdue. In actual fact, you know how bands have got website things going on? I checked out the Cowsills' website. They've got this new album out called *Global*, actually. So I bought it on the internet and they took my money and sent me the record. And it's jolly good as well. I think, you know, there's a lot to be said for the Cowsills, and the internet. The great thing about the internet is that obscure things — there's no one in Britain who likes the Cowsills — so you can get in touch with people who equally have this Cowsills fetish.

Nardwuar: "Would Be So Hot" is the name of a new song on the Damned record, right there, Dave?

Captain Sensible: No, "Would You Be So Hot."

Nardwuar: "Would You Be So Hot"! Now, Mister Captain Sensible, excuse me, that has some Lennon-esque references in it, doesn't it?

Captain Sensible: Yeah, I think John Lennon would be really pissed off the way people are talking about him as being some messiah, Jesus figure and stuff. He'd be really pissed off. So we're basically agreeing with John there.

Nardwuar: Did he ever hear you guys? Did you ever run into John Lennon? Did they ever have a Damned record at all?

Dave Vanian: No idea.

Captain Sensible: I think he was busy in his flat

in New York wanking at the time.

Nardwuar: Because isn't there another connection between John Lennon and the song "W" on your new record, too?

Captain Sensible: No.

Nardwuar: Yes there is, because "W" stands for Wings. And did you not displace Paul McCartney's Wings with "Love Song" in the charts years ago, Captain Sensible?

Dave Vanian: Yeah! [laughing]

Nardwuar: What is the story behind that?

Captain Sensible: I think that week, less people bought McCartney's song than bought ours. It's as simple as that, I'm afraid. [laughs]

Nardwuar: You guys also have a song called "Looking for Action" there, Dave from the Damned.

Dave Vanian: Dave of the Damned, that's me, yes, and?

Nardwuar: You also have a song called "Looking for Action." Now did Robert Plant go "looking for some action" at a Damned gig?

Nardwuar: You've also got Pinch in the band from English Dogs, who's a shirt lifter.

Dave Vanian: [laughs] Good God, he's not a shirt lifter, is he?

Robert Plant checked out the Damned and actually enjoyed you guys?

Captain Sensible: That's an interesting segue there isn't it? Yeah, he did. Down at the Roxy, the old punk club.

Nardwuar: So you have a lot of the old rockers checking you out and enjoying you, because I heard a story when you first came to New York in 1977, that the Rolling Stones left you guys some hookers and some b-b-blow...

Captain Sensible: [silence]

Nardwuar: ... Pies!

Captain Sensible: Yeah, some pies and um, what else? Oh yes, some hookers. That was nice of 'em wasn't it?

Nardwuar: The Rolling Stones supported the Damned. That's incredible.

Captain Sensible: Some of them liked us. I mean Marc Bolan from T-Rex liked us. He could see it. But some of them were threatened, people like, well — probably nobody remembers Phil Collins now — but I remember at the time he said, "I've looked at this so-called punk phenomenon and I see nothing of any worth." But Bolan thought it was brilliant and he took us out on tour with him.

Nardwuar: Sir Cliff Richard didn't like you guys, did he? He didn't want to introduce you on some TV show, Dave?

Dave Vanian: That's the name; he objects to the name.

Nardwuar: He just wanted nothing to do with you?

Captain Sensible: No, but we had people outside our shows in California, didn't we, the first time we went over, with banners saying like "This Damned menace," and "Send 'em back home" and stuff like that.

Nardwuar: But let's not say that America hates you, because you guys recently were at Joey Ramone's birthday party. That was a real touching event. Maybe you could comment about that there, Captain or Dave?

Dave Vanian: Which one is it? [laughs]

Captain Sensible: Well, we loved the Ramones, and Joe was such a nice bloke and he nearly got to his 50th birthday, but he missed it by a few days. So his mum organized the gig anyway, and he had his birthday party anyway, and it was quite touching back stage. The Ramones meant so much to everyone really, apart from Phil Collins, who hated them.

Nardwuar: And you guys got flown over to that event. You're, like, one of the few bands from out of town that actually played.

Dave Vanian: Yeah, it was really a New York event with Cheap Trick, Blondie. It was like being at a big family event. It was quite good.

Nardwuar: Now, the Damned weren't always New Yorker family-type people, were you? You have that song "Idiot Box," don't you Captain Sensible?

Captain Sensible: Tom Verlaine you hideous snot, you should have wrote the golden shot. Yeah...

Captain Sensible: Television pulled out of a gig with us, which actually caused us financial hardship because we were doing a gig with them on the west coast in 1977, was it? We had to put a box on the door saying —

because Television right booted us off their gig or whatever — "If you want to see The Damned, if you want to send them home, put some money in this box." It was full, actually. We had Rod Stewart and all sorts of people on the guest list for that one, didn't we?

Dave Vanian: Except Jake Riviera (Damned manager) tore up the guest list. Yeah, he said, "They could pay!" [Ripping sound]

Captain Sensible: [laughs]

Nardwuar: Jerry Nolan of The Heartbreakers, he dissed you guys too. That's another New York guy. He said you were kicked off the Anarchy Tour because you were sissies.

Captain Sensible: The truth about the Anarchy Tour was that we were on a small label with Stiff and the other three bands were on big labels. And we were staying at a little bed and breakfast. I don't know if you know what bed and breakfasts are over here — they're tiny sort of little flea pits. You're lucky if you've got a phone in there. They were staying in swanky, flash hotels. So anyway, our manager went over...

Nardwuar: "They" being the Sex Pistols, right?

Dave Vanian: Yeah.

Captain Sensible: They went over to negotiate...

Nardwuar: You're not afraid to say that word, are you Captain Sensible? "Sex Pistols." Soon to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame! [The Captain then grabs Nardwuar and pretends to punch him.] How do you feel about that there, Captain Sensible?

Captain Sensible: I love them. I think they're great. [singing] God bless the Sex Pistols! They're a bunch of wholesome blokes!

Nardwuar: Why was Sid always chucking stuff at you? Hey Dave, why was Sid always chucking stuff at you?

Captain Sensible: 'Cause he was fucking out of his mind on heroin, what do you think?

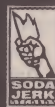
Nardwuar: Well, did he like you? **RAZORCAKE** 23

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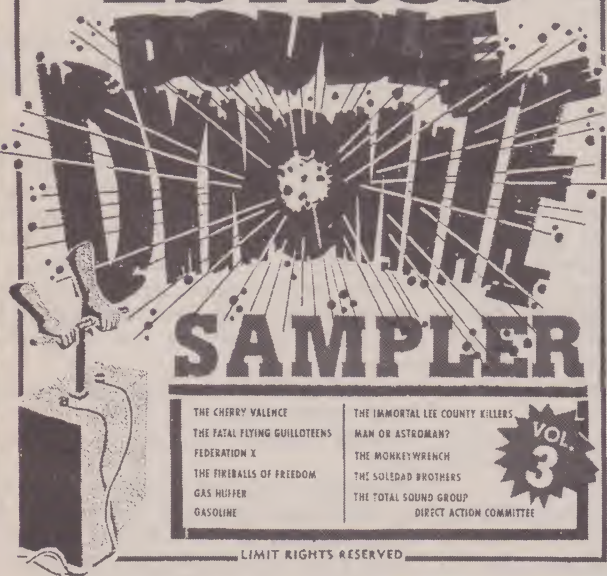
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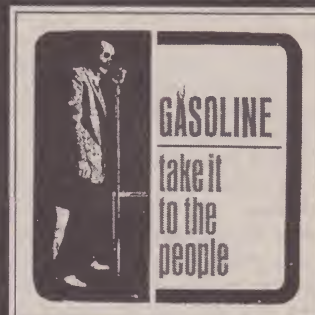
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Come on, he must have liked you still deep down.

Captain Sensible: No, when you look back at those days, the punk scene, you know... It looks as though it was a scene and everyone was like sort of getting on and all this stuff. But like with most sorts of things, there's dreadful rivalries going on. We absolutely hated The Clash and The Clash hated the Pistols and the Pistols hated Siouxsie and the Banshees. It was one of those sorts of things. I remember the Clash went 'round to see Johnny Rotten one day because he'd slagged them off in a music paper and Joe Strummer walked out crying, or was it Mick? You know, really upset. It wasn't like everyone sort of going, "Yeah, great to see you," and all this stuff. It's fine now.

Nardwuar: Johnny Rotten called you a "glossed-over Eddie and the Hot Rods." Dave, Dave don't leave. Dave, what do you think about that?

Dave Vanian: For one thing, it's the wrong kind of music, so I don't know why he said that.

Nardwuar: 'Cause I think that's kind of mean though, isn't it? That is kind of mean.

Captain Sensible: Yeah, lots of bands say lots of things about each other.

Nardwuar: Are you going to make up with them at all? I mean, are you just going to just forgive him and put him on the guest list for your upcoming LA gig at all?

Captain Sensible: Who? John?

Nardwuar: Yeah.

Captain Sensible: He's a great, great bloke. I think he's a tragically overlooked talent, especially in our country, in Britain. He should have his own TV program. But because he's a bit raunchy and he doesn't suffer fools gladly, he's had to come over here to work. It's bloody terrible isn't it?

Dave Vanian: He has his own TV show, I think...

Captain Sensible: Yeah, they pulled the plugs on it after one series though.

Dave Vanian: It was too controversial, I guess.

Nardwuar: You guys recorded *New Rose* on "cider and speed." Now what did you record your brand new Nitro release on?

Captain Sensible: [laughs] Tonic wine.

Nardwuar: Tell us more about that Captain Sensible.

Captain Sensible: It used to be a tragedy. Touring in the States was really difficult because there was no decent beer. It was Molson, Coors, Schlitz, Budweiser, Miller, stuff like that. It was appalling, absolutely tragic. But nowadays you got these micro-breweries and blah blah blah. Apparently, we're going to do a tour of Sierra Nevada Pale Ale, which is our particular favorite, so it's safe to tour the States again.

Nardwuar: At the beginning of the interview, you hauled out some bananas. Now there's always bananas around the Damned. Are there going to be bananas on stage tonight Dave? And how have you avoided bananas? And has the Captain used ice cubes, too?

Dave Vanian: I always avoid anything that looks like a dangerous weapon, which is usually a banana.

Nardwuar: Now how come you've never slipped in any bananas?

Dave Vanian: I have.

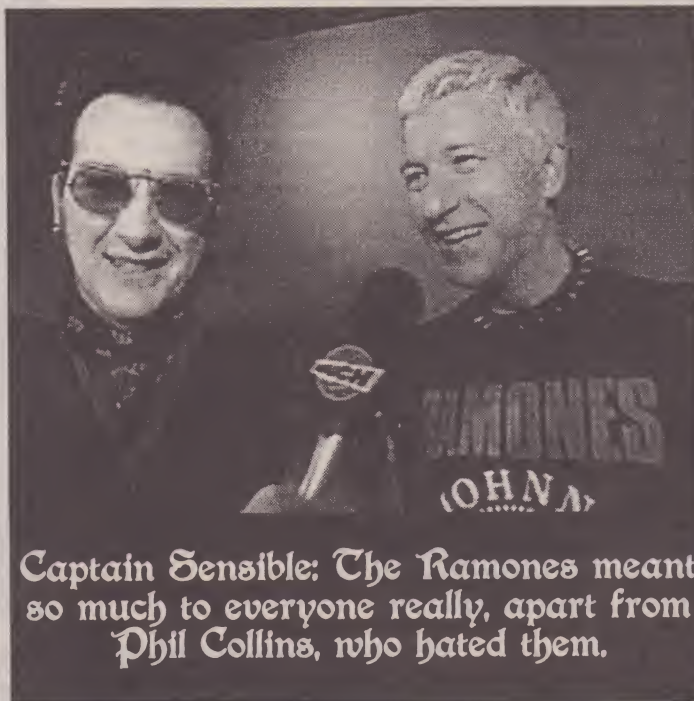
Nardwuar: What? Please tell us a little bit

about Dave's experience.

Dave Vanian: I've ended up on my unceremonious rump many a times, sir. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Captain, what's going to happen with the bananas tonight? And ice cubes? There's always bananas, up ass! Ice cubes, up ass... and other places too, Captain. You've still got it. You're Captain Sensible and Dave Vanian of the Damned!

Captain Sensible: Yeah!



Captain Sensible: The Ramones meant so much to everyone really, apart from Phil Collins, who hated them.

Nardwuar: You've also got Pinch in the band from English Dogs, who's a shirt lifter.

Dave Vanian: [laughs] Good God, he's not a shirt lifter, is he?

Nardwuar: He's a shirt lifter! Pinch is a shirt lifter.

Captain Sensible: He wouldn't be the first. We had that bloke out of Culture Club. He was in the Damned for five minutes.

Dave Vanian: John Moss!

Captain Sensible: John Moss. [laughs] He was a shirt lifter. God bless him though. Nice bloke.

Nardwuar: So how much snot and gob has got thrown at you guys?

Dave Vanian: None.

Nardwuar: I mean in the early days, is there any good example of snot and gob?

Captain Sensible: That is Rat Scabies. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Come on, you must have taken the brunt of it too. He's behind the drums. He's safe.

Dave Vanian: Nah, he always used to get off the drums and run round the front.

Nardwuar: And then he'd get the snot and gob.

Dave Vanian: Yeah.

Nardwuar: Captain and Dave of the Damned, I wanted to ask you about this press clipping. I've shown it to so many bands over and over again, but if anybody is authorized to examine this and tell me the history behind this, maybe you can.

Dave Vanian: [looking at the clipping which shows actors dressed as punks beside the Queen Mum] See that one there with the wooden leg? That's Captain's sister.

Nardwuar: Let's just read the caption here. "Remembering punk: a group of youngsters representing the punk era walk past the Queen mum and Prince Charles."

Captain Sensible: Oh, fucking great.

Nardwuar: Now, did you ever think that punk would end up this way, Captain Sensible? "Walking by the Queen mum, a group of youngsters representing the punk era?"

Captain Sensible: Yeah, the Queen mum's looking great. The reason we're out on tour though at the moment is that we hear rumors that she's going to die while we're away, so the next few days, I think you might be hearing

some tragic news from Britain, and hopefully they'll get it all over with and we can go back and it'd be safe. When she pops her clogs, you won't be able to open the newspaper or turn the TV on without, "Oh, she won the second World War, the most marvelous granny in the world," and all that old bullshit. Yeah. They're still about. This is why punk has got to work harder to get rid of them.

Nardwuar: I said Captain.

Captain Sensible: I said wot?

Nardwuar: I said Captain.

Dave Vanian: What you want?

Nardwuar: I said Captain.

Captain Sensible: [laughs]

Nardwuar: I said Captain.

Captain Sensible: I said fuck off shithead or I'll fucking knee you in the bollocks, you cunt!

Nardwuar: It's funny you say the word "shithead." Joey Shithead of the rock and roll

band DOA, he put out some of your records. Do you even know that? DOA from Vancouver, Joey Shithead of Sudden Death Records. You're on Sudden Death Records, do you know that Dave?

Dave Vanian: He obviously owes us money.

Nardwuar: Ok, well, we'll edit that part out.

Dave Vanian: Where is he?

Nardwuar: He's on tour, he's on tour, I swear. I swear. Now you also have a song called "She" on *Grave Disorder*, "She"... speaking about "She" - sorry if I spat on you right there - "She, she," Chrissy Hynde, can you give me a little Chrissy Hynde tidbit because I think she kinda was around back then.

Dave Vanian: You leave her tidbits alone!

Nardwuar: Just a little bit of Chrissy Hynde-ing, please there Captain. What do you remember about Chrissy Hynde, 'cause she always, you know, brags about being around back then. What was she like, there, Captain?

Captain Sensible: She was great. She's great now. She got in terrible trouble for saying "Bomb McDonalds" didn't she, when she was on an animal rights demonstration.

Nardwuar: She was a punk back then, eh?

Captain Sensible: Yeah, I hate McDonalds as well. Bloody shit they are.

Nardwuar: You don't like Siouxsie Sioux. What's the deal on Siouxsie Sioux? Why is she such a snob?

Captain Sensible: Well, she just is. She's an appalling snob. Only marginally worse than Steve Severin (Siouxsie and the Banshees bassist) who's a complete tosser.

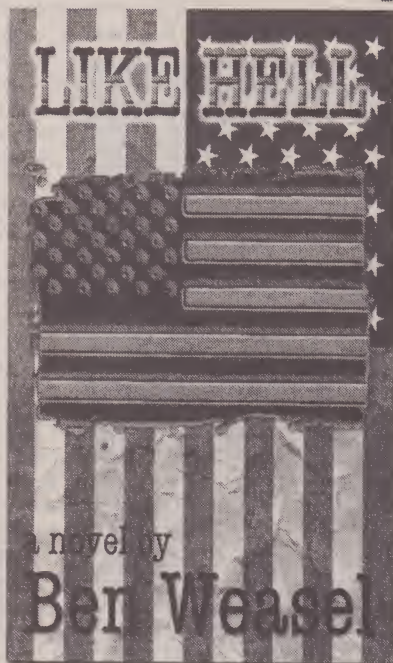
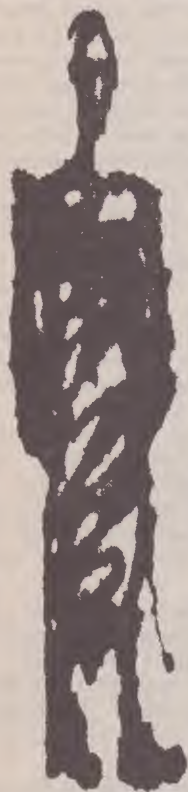
Nardwuar: How bout Paul Weller?

Captain Sensible: No, Paul's **RAZORCAKE** 23

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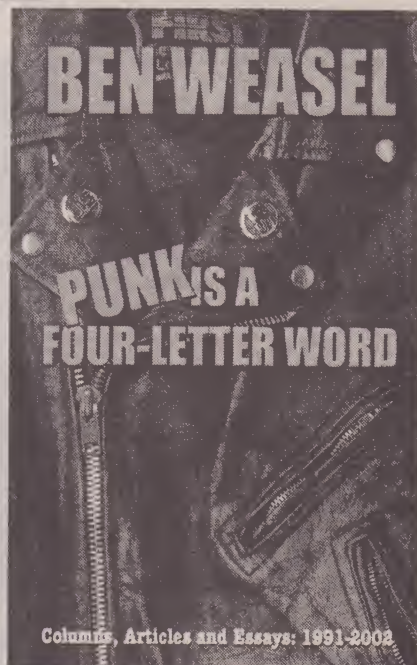
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alright. Nice bloke.

Dave Vanian: He's just a bit miserable. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Dave, tell me about your motorbikes?

Dave Vanian: I'm not telling you anything.

Nardwuar: Oh, please, come on. Tell me about your motorbikes. You have some Harleys don't you?

Dave Vanian: They've got two tires and handlebars. What do you want to know?

Nardwuar: Yeah, I want to know which ones you have, like what model, if you're into it, etcetera, etcetera. Is Dave being elusive right now, Captain? What's going on?

Dave Vanian: Nine point two.

Captain Sensible: [mumbles something]

Nardwuar: What can you do with that banana Captain? Could you maybe help us out with that, please?

Dave Vanian: He's very good at origami.

Nardwuar: Yeah, is there anything you can do with that banana there Captain Sensible of The

Captain Sensible: Well, round the top of Holland, they're actually building a huge dam which they're draining this whole piece of land which is hundreds of square miles, which is going to add a huge portion of land to Holland. Very interesting. Because over the top of the dam is a motorway as well. And it's a great bit of civil engineering.

Nardwuar: Now do you find it hard explaining something serious like that, looking at my face just covered in banana and cheese?

Captain Sensible: [chuckles] You're making me hungry.

Nardwuar: You love eating, don't you? Wasn't your nickname "Eats" too? Didn't you have a nickname "Eats"?

Captain Sensible: It was! You know too much! That's amazing. God bloody blimey.

Nardwuar: You're Captain Sensible but you're also "Eats" too.

Captain Sensible: Marlon Eats, yes, that was my preferred nickname. Then I ended up with

being. When he was straight he was a good bloke. And I blame that partly on McLaren... You'll have to run that by your legal people, I'm afraid. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Dave Vanian and Captain Sensible of the Damned, here we are winding up with this interview. Is this what it often looks like at the end of a Damned gig, Dave?

Dave Vanian: No, but it looks like the end of the dressing room.

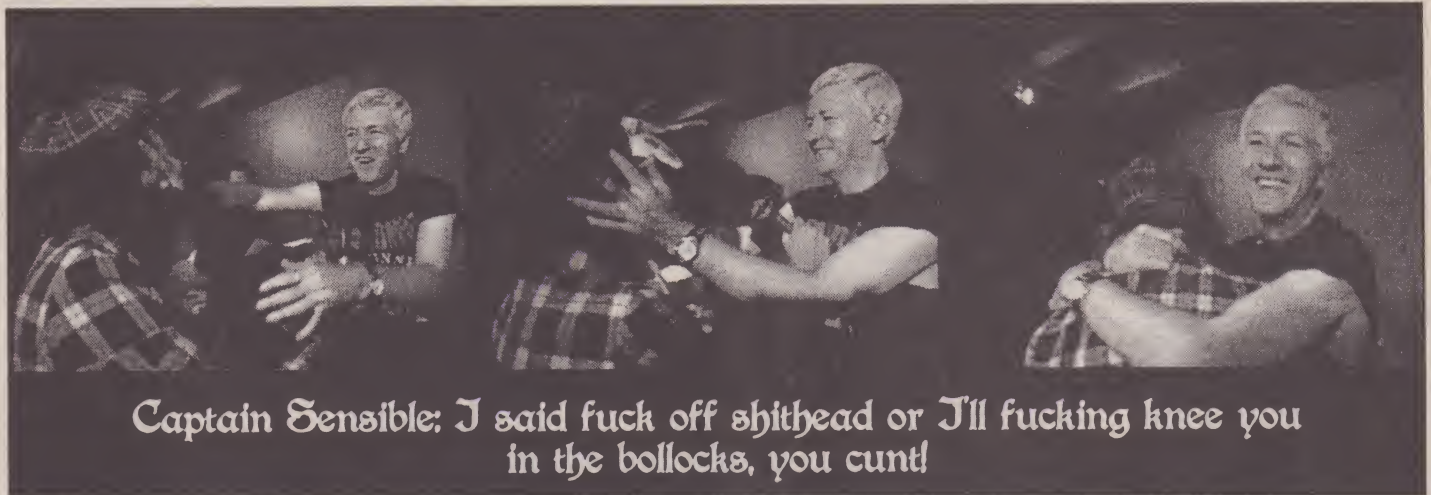
Nardwuar: The dressing room here at the Commodore Ballroom in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The Damned are back! *Grave Disorder*, right, there, Captain Sensible?

Dave Vanian: Arr, arr!

Captain Sensible: [laughs] Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen. It's so kind of you.

Nardwuar: Now that's an ad there for your new LP, *Grave Disorder*, but you've done some other ads haven't you there Captain Sensible? Weetabix. What are you doing with Weetabix?

Captain Sensible: [laughs] Yes, the sensible



Captain Sensible: I said fuck off shithead or I'll fucking knee you in the bollocks, you cunt!

Damned, for us, that you can examine or show? [The Captain then gives Nardwuar a banana "face wash." Mumbling, grunting ensue.]

Nardwuar: Ah, ooooh, that's pretty good. That's pretty good, Captain Sensible and Dave Vanian of The Damned. Thank you very much for giving me a face wash with the banana. Too bad you don't have any ice cubes there, Captain Sensible!

Captain Sensible: Do you like cheese?

Nardwuar: I love cheese, oh I love cheese, I love cheese. Can I rub my face and your face now, too?

Captain Sensible: Yah.

Nardwuar: Let me rub my face and your face...

[Before Nardwuar can rub his face into the Captain's mug, the Captain pushes some chunks of cheese into Nardwuar's ears]... Oh! I love cheese, thank you. [The Captain then throws some water at Nardwuar almost hitting Dave.]

Nardwuar: Oh! See, Dave never gets hit. That's where I am going to move, over by Dave. 'Cause I don't think Dave ever gets hit with anything.

Captain Sensible: [grabbing microphone and singing] "It's only a game, so put up a real good fight. I'm going to be sniggering you tonight, whoo hoo!" Buy my records, you cunts!

Nardwuar: The Damned, Dave Vanian and also Captain Sensible. Now winding up here Damned, have you guys ever been to a dam? Have you ever been to a dam? And what is your favorite dam?

Captain Sensible.

Dave Vanian: What about Dame Edna Beverage?

Captain Sensible: Oh yes, mmm, yah, knock, knock, knock... Who's there?

Dave Vanian: [Spotting at picture in the book *The Album Cover Art of Punk*] Malcolm McLaren looking like a teddy-boy.

Captain Sensible: He's a fucking wanker.

Nardwuar: Yeah, that's what I wanted to ask you guys. Malcolm McLaren. To me, he seems like a genius, touring the south and all the crazy stuff. There was some neat stuff about Malcolm, wasn't there?

Captain Sensible: He invented everything, everything in the world, you know. He told everyone to do this and that and blah, blah, blah. Yeah, he invented punk and rap and he did this! Genius, absolute genius.

Nardwuar: What did he do wrong to you guys, Dave?

Dave Vanian: He didn't do anything wrong with me.

Nardwuar: Well what was wrong with Malcolm McLaren then?

Captain Sensible: No, but I mean, as Sid Vicious's manager, I don't think he was really looking after his own interests to say, "Here, take these drugs and go berserk Sid." It may have escaped his attention that drugs actually kill people—especially heroin, you know, it's not a good one. And so I just... Sid was a... when he was off his face he was an appalling human

choice, Weetabix. I needed the money, to be quite honest.

Nardwuar: And you also have a commercial for the telephone company in France or something?

Captain Sensible: How do you know these things? Yeah!

Dave Vanian: Oh god!

Captain Sensible: I've actually recorded "Captain, I say Wot," and it's the captain of the French football team who's done it. And uh, yeah, I can hear the sound of cash registers as we speak. [laughs]

Nardwuar: I said Captain...

Captain Sensible: I said wot?

Nardwuar: I said Captain...

Dave Vanian: Lots of Euros. [laughs]

Nardwuar: So Dave and Captain Sensible of the rock and roll band The Damned, anything else you'd like to add to the people out there?

Captain Sensible: Yeah, I've noticed in Vancouver there's quite a lot of sushi houses, so I'm going to get some food.

Nardwuar: Why should people care about The Damned? Why should people care?

Dave Vanian: If they like music.

Captain Sensible: We're better than Britney.

Nardwuar: Alright, thanks very much and doot doola doot doo...

Captain Sensible and Dave Vanian: Dooo dooo.

-Nardwuar

<http://www.nardwuar.com>

RAZORCAKE 27



Gary Hornberger

Squeeze My Horn

SEEMS THAT OATH THAT DOCTORS TAKE DOESN'T APPLY IF YOUR PATIENT JUST KILLED THE PRESIDENT.

What is it about death that's so gripping? Why am I even talking about it? Let me tell you why. A while back, my wife informed me that she likes to read the obituaries. All I could think was, "That's sick." But, of course, they say that one can't look away from a wreck. I had to see what was so enticing in that section of the newspaper. It turns out that one can find bits of history in those pages. They cover every-

I'm pretty sure it was because he saved some guards, not the prisoners. Up until Louise's death, she tried to clear his name. Still, to this day the family is swimming against the political red tape.

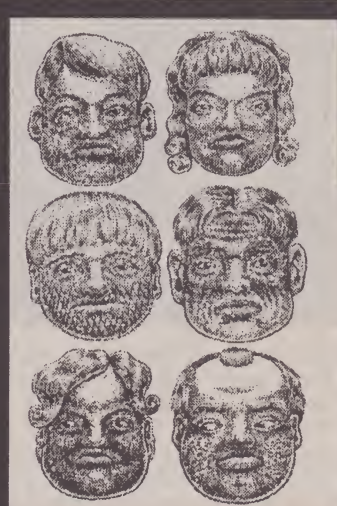
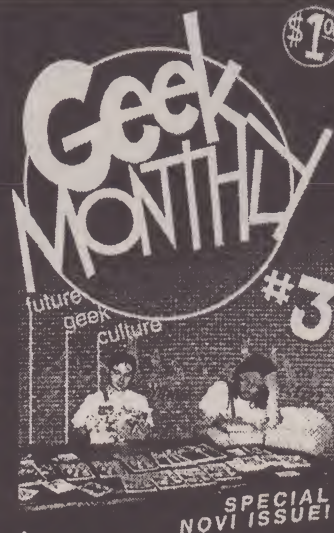
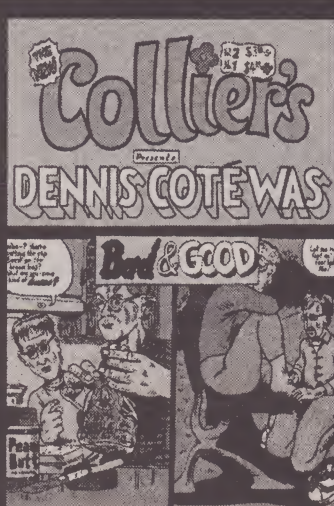
On the same page I got some history on the Vietnam war, due to the fact that Gen. Van Tien Dung — the man that led the capture of Saigon — died. Oddly, history is cruel or genius because it gives

field wall.

Finally, even the bad guys get into the act. This one was about the passing of a bank robber. Eddie Watkins, known as "Fast Eddie," because he liked to get in and out without harming anyone. This guy was amazing. It's almost funny because this guy was a revolving felon. The paper states that he had a 43-year career. At least he knew what he was good at. It almost

time I got a hold of a "grrl" comic, I dashed it. Truthfully, I like this one. The last one I reviewed sucked the life out of me because the writer was just plain gone. How do you get into something that just progressively gets worse and worse? This one is upbeat and funny. These girls have a serious wet pack for Star Trek. One is hot for Wil Wheaton and another is in want of the robot Data. Hell, if girls talk

Gary Hornberger



thing from sports to financial wizards. One of my favorites was a woman named Louise Mudd Arehart. The name means nothing, so keep reading. It turns out she's the granddaughter of the doctor that set John Wilkes Booth's leg after he shot Lincoln. Doctor Mudd got a life sentence for doing that little job. Seems that oath that doctors take doesn't apply if your patient just killed the President, but if he did in any of our commoner great grandparents, I think the government would let it slide. Now I know why there are militias in Montana. Back to our Louise. She spent her whole life trying to clear her grandfather's name. See, they sent this guy to a remote prison in the Florida Keys, and while he was there he saved the lives of some prisoners and some guards during a yellow fever outbreak. For that, President Johnson pardoned him.

people the opportunity to be famous twice. I've read about a guy from NASA who was really responsible for space flight but, because he wasn't in the capsule, became back page news. I found who was responsible for creating the Los Angeles zoo. It's all there. You just have to get by the macabre factor.

Of course, some people probably don't want to be in those pages. Take Al Smith, a pro baseball player and a pretty damn good one after reviewing his stats. It seems that while playing in the World Series, Mr. Smith took a beer in the face while watching a home run fly over the fence. I have to admit it's one fine photo, unless you're Al. The guy must have brought the beer from home or they allowed beer pitchers at the ballpark in 1959, because it's the longest stream of fluid I've ever seen fall over an out-

sounded as if the city of Cleveland embraced this guy as a favorite son. This guy had a hard-on for banks, so I guess if you're good at something and you go for it, it must become easier over time.

So, yeah, I'm getting off on reading the obituaries. It's like learning history without someone's warped twist on things — just brief, short facts that tell the reader to make up his or her mind. I don't want some glossed up story about some founding father cutting down a cherry tree, I want to know if he got sick from eating the cherries. Checking the death files is a pretty cool source of information. Useful or useless? Alright! Let's get to my meat and potatoes. Let's do some comics.

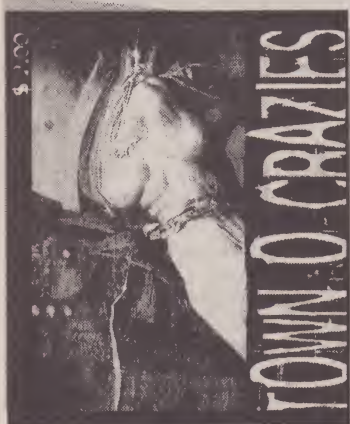
BEDHEAD PRESS

"The future of grrl comics." That's what the cover states. Well, the last

about stuff like that on the phone, they should record it and sell it like the Jerky Boys did. This one is filled with girl talk, girl fantasy, and even some gratuitous sex. There are two good shorts at the end. The first has this girl feeling down until her cat shows up and, of course, that animal perks her up. I know. I've got three dogs. The second just plain says it all, "Too much rock and roll makes me want to dance and yell and fuck hard! It's the devil's music!" Long live rock and roll. You can imagine the visual for that. I don't know if this one is written for girls or anyone, but I'll tell you I kinda got a rise out of it. Pretty good art work on this one, too. I recommend this one if you want to find out what makes girls tick. (Bedhead Press, 2100 N. Main St. #B6, LA, CA 90031; <<http://www.bedheadpress.com>>)

DENNIS COTE WAS
Presented by
THE NEW COLLIER'S
\$3.50 U.S., \$4.95 Can.

If ever a common man dies and his friend glorifies him in the pages of a comic, this is it. Now one has to ask oneself, "Is my life story so bad that it graces the pages of a comic, or is someone so evil they would mock me after I'm dead and buried?" Well, I've got to tell you that this is really well written. The writer gives a good, objective look at his friend's life. He gives both the highs and lows. I personally like how Dennis takes his dog from an abusive owner and names it Astro, so the dog would respond after being called asshole by the previous owner. Also, there's the confrontation with a cop about littering after this Dennis character throws an apple in the gutter. The cop tells him to pick it up and Dennis's argument is that it is biodegradable. I'm for the later. Basically, the book goes through the trials and tribulations that



friendships go through. When the two drift apart, they still keep in touch. In the end, tragedy takes the life of Dennis just when things are clearing up. He's hit by a car while riding his bike. All in all, this one's a heartfelt eulogy to a good friend in a medium that the writer can best convey his feelings. As for wanting to read this, I say hell yes. We're all common Joes on this paved planet and we all have stories that make us laugh or cry. Those memories are the things that keep us going, so if we can save them we sure as heck should. (Drawn and Quarterly, PO Box 48056, Montreal, QC, Canada H2V4S8; <www.drawnandquarterly.com>)

GEEK MONTHLY

#3, #1.00 U.S.

Here, I'll just say it. This rag is fucking great. These guys have the lockdown on great movies to be. I had no idea that someone was actually working on making a Ghost Rider movie. This movie, if done

right, would bring *Spiderman* the movie into the file with that horror movie called *Captain America*. Also, they claim that there is going to be a Deathlok movie. This little gem is a treasure chest of information on strange but cool video finds. The fact that these guys hang out with the Green Lantern is just a sensory overload. Unfortunately, this is an old issue from last year and I pray that these guys are still doing this stellar work to inform the population at large of these remarkable finds. So if you guys read this, please send some more stuff out. Feel the joy. (Geek Monthly, 1072 Island Dr Ct-Apt.104, Ann Arbor, MI, 48105; <geekmonthly@aol.com>)

THE MAGIC WHISTLE

#6, \$2.95 U.S.

I want to say that I read one of the earlier copies of this comic and it had some funny stuff in it, but this one was a struggle to read. This one is pretty much bathroom humor — guys going home to their inflatable girls, or telling another character that at least he can still get a boner. Let me tell you, I sure as hell didn't get an erection thumbing through the shit in this read. I'm really hoping that this guy had brain freeze and that he had writer's block up to the deadline. Hopefully, the next issue will be back to the funny stuff now that the crap is unclogged. (Alternative Comics, Inc., 503 NW 37th Ave., Gainesville, FL 32609)

MODICUM3

\$2, U.S.

This is an interesting little comic, with an unusual cover — six head shots drawn in a way that these people seem to all be from the same tribe. The story in the pulp section of this little comic is stingingly sweet. The story is about a nine-year-old kid who seems to be having age crises just before his ninth birthday. This kid's mind drifts farther off than a piece of wood in the river, but as I remember about youth, that was the way it was. At the start he's helping his mom paint ladybugs out of rocks. Then he starts pondering that he's halfway to eighteen, which would mean he was eligible for the draft. While pondering, he paints a bug on the lawn chair which gets him sent to his room. Of course, the room is shared with an older brother who teases him, then tries to rat on him. So, what does one do but go fly a kite? That's right. Kite flying, which is the perfect place to do some heavy thinking. While kite flying, a girl friend yells up the hill at him which sends him running to their hangout, a flow

pipe under a road where they draw on the concrete and store all the used kite string spindles. She catches up with him to tell him that his mom is pissed and he should be getting home. At this point, the kid gets stuck in the tunnel, and the art work is so good that the reader gets a little worried for the kid. However, after the scare he frees himself and is so relieved that when he emerges from the tunnel he gives his friend a grateful hug. I find this story taking me back to when I was a kid: the day dreaming, the contemplation of growing older and getting shit-scared when you get into a tight fit. So, if you can identify this kid with something you did when you were young, you're going to love this. If not, don't read it, and go back to drinking your beer. (Michael King, 2125 I Street #2, Sacramento, CA 95816)

PATRICK THE WOLF BOY

\$2.95 U.S., \$3.95 Can.

At first I was thinking, "Oh great, an Eddie Munster rip-off," but, actually, the little imp grows on ya. Come on, anyone who can get the grim reaper to shake the jeep from Popeye out of a tree for themselves is pretty cool. Then again, anyone who has an in with the reaper is impressive. The three little stories about the wolf boy are silly funny and that's what makes this comic great for kids. That's right, I'm a big kid and yes, I watched the "Munsters" and "Elvira" so I can appreciate the wolf boy. There is also a short in the back of this one that deals with space beans and bloaty dogs, that, to be honest, I just don't get. Patrick alone is worth the read.



(BlindWolf/ Electric Milk Comics, PO Box 465, Cross River, NY 10518; <www.patrickthewolfboy.net>)

TOWN O CRAZIES

\$ 2.00 U.S.

Well kick my ass, here's some artwork. The cover alone is worth the price. The first work is awesome. It uses a verse from Psalms. The main character goes on a samurai rampage in a town of Nosferatus. The artwork in this is spectacular. Next up is the short history of Campbell California as seen through the eyes of one of its own citizens. Then there's something called "sketch book." This stuff I would hang in my house if they were originals. The art is way out there but cool like the *Aliens* stuff. Lastly is "Dee Emergency Driver." I just couldn't get into this one. The art is simpler. It's not bad but not like the first three. Then there's the story line. I just couldn't get it. There's a time line that's hard to follow and characters that don't fully evolve and places that are vague. It's like passing by a bakery and getting one of those good whiffs but not being able to put your finger on what it is. So, with the first three sections of this book your monies are well spent and you may or may not like the fourth. The cover by itself screams rock'n'roll. (Jerome Opena, 2700 Ulloa St., SF, CA 94116; <dudikoff1@hotmail.com>)

-Gary Hornberger

Gary Hornberger



Designated Dale

I'm Against It



Keith Moon did to the drums what O.J. Simpson did to his ex-wife Nicole. Beat. Maim. Destroy. Kill.

Designated Dale

We speak of them when trying to explain that one of these people can make or break the band. These fine folks punk their gear up a flight of stairs like an overloaded mining mule, whether it be for a rehearsal or for access to the upstairs stage for a gig. (Actually, that's a ball-sweating round of exercise for the whole band, come to think of it.) They are the ones tightly holding it all together for the band while cranking it out big at the end of a live set, similar to the plighted person who's holding a quivering, brewing shit within their bowels until the minute their ass hits the toilet. They can also be the major cause of things to fall apart miserably onstage at a live gig, kinda like the previously mentioned person, but in this case letting that same load of hot-steeped shit rush down their leg and all over the floor. (There *has* been a So. Cal. term coined for this certain type of live performance fuckup — it's called Chris Reeing it, ain't that right, Mark? Yuk, yuk, yuk.) These certain musicians I'm alluding to are usually the butt-end of some stale, lame-ass MIT student's joke (Musician's Institute of Technology — fuck them violently in the ass with a amputee's nub).

I'm sure most of you know which band member I'm flapping my trap about here, right? You don't? The people I speak of here are drummers, the upstanding backbone of all bands who use one. They're the four-on-the-floor motherfuckers who make you dizzy when you watch their band live or spin their music. Unfortunately, in the case of some bands, drummers can have the effect of a herniated disc, and that can be real painful to be in a band with, let alone watch from the audience side. If you really pay close attention to the drummer the next time you're taking in a gig, chances are you will be able to tell if they are pulling more than their own weight to push their bandmates to get their rock on and make the tunes kick some ass (like all bands *should* do). Or, you will

come to the conclusion that they are better off using their drumsticks to pick their nose and scratch themselves, 'cause what they are doing behind that drum kit just ain't cutting it. Punk rock has spawned a tidy sum of shredding, slamming, top-notch drummers, that's for damn sure. Yet over the years, I've come to find time and time again that a number of bands that some would consider "dinosaur," "dirtbag," or "hippie" have had drummers playing right along with 'em that were as punk as fuck, even though the band's music wasn't. And it's kinda interesting, to say the least, seeing how many of these so-called "relic" drummers have heavily influenced a whole gang of punk drummers, new and old.

But because of limited space, what follows here is only a few of the old school drummers, some that I consider the best at their craft, a few that have had great influence on fellow drum maniacs to follow. And as for the countless, showboating hacks banging drums, oblivious like the jackasses they are (you know who you are), you get nothing and like it (God bless you, Ted Knight). These dolts themselves would warrant a whole other column, maybe even magazine, so don't even get me started on their uselessness!

Ahem. Okay, fuck saving the best for last. I'm gonna start with who I think is the be-all/end-all of rock and roll drummers who played with more heart than anyone I've ever heard in my life — John Henry Bonham, former drummer for Led Zeppelin. Now for those who are booing, crying, or yelling, "What? Led Zeppelin? Fuck that shit! Fuck you, Dale! That ain't punk!" just let me say this — sit down, shut up that stinky hole under yer nose and I'll explain *why* Bonham was one of the biggest punk-as-fuck drum beaters from the old days. John's early days in Birmingham, England were as blue collar as you can get. He swung a hammer by day, in the construction company kept alive by his father and grandfather, and swung a really mean pair of drum-

sticks at night, looking to literally blow away whatever drummer graced the same stage as he did by giving it his all. He was fully dedicated, to say the least. Referring back to what I was saying earlier in my column here, John didn't just simply keep a beat — he unconditionally gave 100% by *always* pulling more than his weight on the drums; pure, raw heart. The real thing. He was an unbridled monster on the skins, the way he would play (and God damn, could he play) from the supernatural pounding (it wasn't how *hard* he hit the drums, but *how* he hit the drums hard), to his impossibly clean chops, the unmistakable-sounding offbeat fills from hell, and a right foot that any drummer in the world would cut off his left foot for, John had it *all* as a rock and roll drummer, period. (Incidentally, for all of you jaded jerkoffs rolling your eyes while reading this, you don't *have* to be a fan of Led Zeppelin at all to realize any of this. John's drumming proves this fact on its own, fuck you very much.)

John would even go as far to "offer" (forcefully suggest) his services to the other band when they would break during a gig, vying to horn in on the other drummer's gig after telling the band how much better it would be with him behind the drums, basically telling them he was going to give it a go with them. All of the bands he pulled this with were skeptics about his intentions, but were *always* proven wrong when given the chance to have him sit in on the drums. The problem was that trouble usually mounted between John and the current bands he was playing with when they would go into the studio to record. The sound engineer in the studio would tell John that he was "unrecordable" because of the loud tuning John preferred on his kit, as well as the volume he was accustomed to playing at. So he'd walk. He figured, fuck it, I'll find someone who *will* play and record the way I do.

He did this often with a number of bands until he found his niche

with a particular one he really got into, a newly formed group that featured ex-Yardbirds guitarist Jimmy Page, seasoned session whiz John Paul Jones, and old band chum Robert Plant, who was the one responsible for bringing Bonham onboard. Led Zeppelin was on its way on becoming the next supergroup to storm the world, but that didn't mean that John wouldn't go and get raging drunk around his old stomping grounds where he grew up. He always respected his roots and lived a rich life with old friends of his past. Be it soaking it up in the local pubs, the numerous parties he threw at his family's home out in the country, or out racing his cars and motorcycles at insane speeds with his mates sitting shotgun, absolutely petrified, John laughed and howled like a maniac. Friggin' nutjob.

John worked extremely hard at not only being the best drummer he could be, but being the best drummer, *period*. Hard work resulted in playtime being even harder. Too hard, for some people, actually. Some of the best Bonham stories are the unbelievably crazy ones. The one particular story that makes me laugh out loud every time I hear it is when John was in Los Angeles for a few days on tour with Zeppelin. He had just bought a muscle car the same afternoon as one of their sold-out nights at the LA Forum. While he was tearing ass all over the streets of Hollywood like a lunatic with no brakes, John was eventually flagged down by a policeman. So what does he do? He stops in the middle of the boulevard, gets out with a big smile on his face, and walks up to introduce himself to the officer. "Hi! I'm John Bonham! How you doing?" I suppose the officer must have been a fan, because he recognized him and John went on to tell him, "Hey, we're playing tonight, you should come down! It'll be great!" Then he asks the officer if he'd like to check out the engine of his new wheels while he goes and pops the hood... all while parked in the middle of

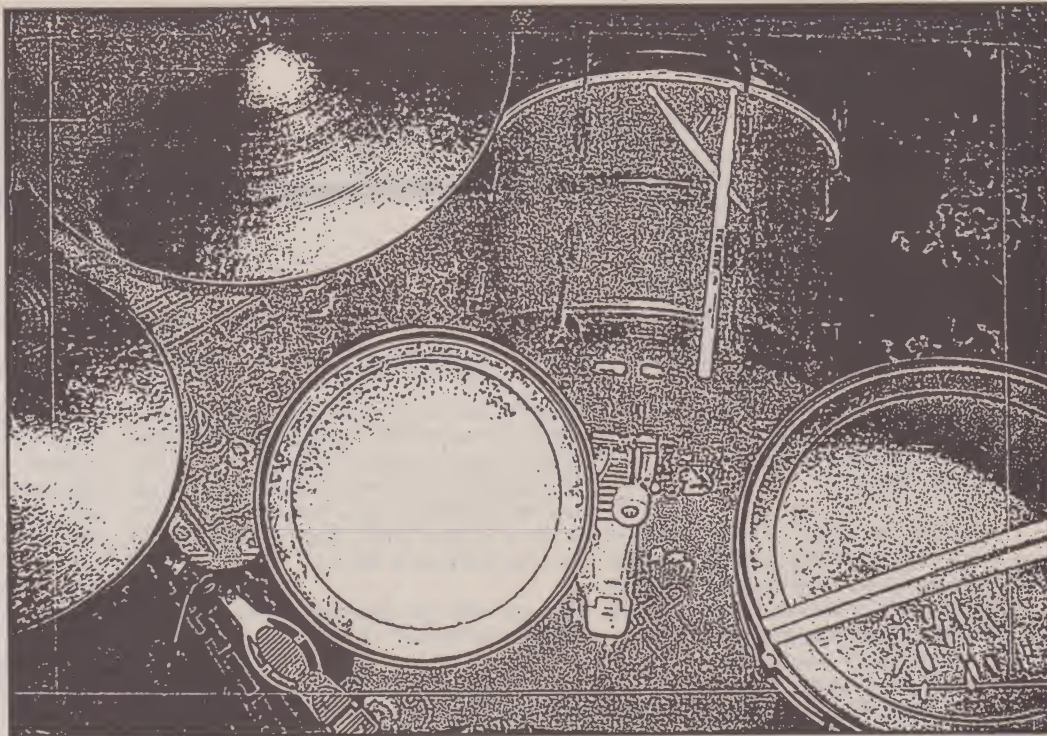
the street. Fucking great! If that ain't punk as fuck, tell me what is.

Another drummer who was right up there with Bonham was actually a good buddy of his. Keith Moon was the insane drummer who played like a man possessed for The Who, one of the three loudest bands in the world, right along side Motorhead and Wasted Youth. Moon did to the drums what O.J. Simpson did to his ex-wife Nicole. Beat. Maim. Destroy. Kill. But, unlike that useless wad of bukkake named O.J., Moon's destructiveness behind his drum kit was a much-anticipated event to witness live. What he did with a set of drums was literally inhuman, with a flailing style that could almost be compared to the likes of an epileptic having a full-blown seizure. This quickly became Moon's signature style, along with packing such a thunderous wallop and precision attack that would make any drummer's jaw.

Like his confidant John Bonham, Moon would ask to sit in with other bands he was watching who were doing a set. But, unlike Bonham, Moon would jump behind the other drummer's kit (whether or not the drummer approved) and start to jam with the band, whenever he could get the opportunity. In one instance, Moon pulled this maneuver on one particular band and worked the jam up into such a crazed frenzy that the drummer's kit he was going apeshit on literally broke apart. Fucking exploded. Feeling his work was done there, he stood up, surveyed the wreckage, quickly apologized to the drummer, and walked up to the bar. Whether or not he bought a pint for the poor bastard who was then the owner of a pile of drum parts remains to be unknown. He might have. Maybe he didn't. Who gives a rat's ass? That's a funny fuckin' story.

The Who were notorious for demolishing their gear onstage at the end of their live sets. When they appeared on "The Smothers Brothers" (Homer Simpson: "Booor-ing!") show, Moon decided to one-up the smashing and bashing at the end of their performance by secretly packing plastic explosive inside of his bass drum. Not knowing the serious effect it would have when it discharged, the explosive boom dummied up some eardrums (ain't that right, Mr. Townsend?) and sent cymbal shrapnel flying across the TV studio, injuring a studio worker who got unexpectedly tagged with a piece of the metal souvenir. Now, can you honestly sit there and tell me that this crazed Englishman (lovingly known as Moon the Loon) wasn't punk as fuck? Right. Didn't think so.

Besides these two characters, there were a string of other drummers from years past that had some of the same attitude towards being a drummer like Bonham and Moon had. One in particular, that most people wouldn't expect, was a fantastic session drummer from the '60's named Bernard "Pretty" Purdie, who most notably laid down tracks with James Brown and Aretha Franklin. I know, you're thinking, "Soul music? What is so fucking punk rock about that, Dale?" Well, keep in mind that the punk spirit isn't simply some bottled sound or wacky way



of dressing yourself – it's an attitude, the way one lives. Being that Purdie was one of, if not the best, soul drummers at the time, he fully exuberated that attitude, and rightfully so.

That attitude is noted perfectly in this following story that makes me crack a grin and guffaw whenever it comes to mind. It seems that Purdie showed up to the studio one day for a recording session, and as he walked in carrying a briefcase, he strolled right over to where his drum kit was set up, opened his briefcase, and pulled out and unfolded a large sign. The sign read, "Pretty Purdie: if you need me, call me – the little old hitmaker." He then continued to hang the sign on the wall directly behind him. During the session, a couple of the other musicians couldn't help but notice the sign and were kind of looking amongst each other, muttering "What's this shit?" A little while later, when Purdie was out of the room, one of the musicians went up to the sign to check it out, and when he turned it over, there it was printed in big letters – "FUCK YOU."

I dare anyone to tell me that ol' "Pretty" Purdie didn't have that pure punk spirit living inside that soulstastic heart of his, bless 'em. An interesting side note about Purdie is that he seriously attests to have recorded drum tracks for some twenty-one Beatles songs from their earlier catalogue. The strange thing is that the only people who know about this are himself, the Beatles' manager Brian Epstein, and the engineer who sat in with Purdie for those sessions. Unfortunately, Brian Epstein is dead, and he will never be able to comment on any of it, and the engineer has remained unnamed. Purdie gives the reason that it will be a very big story in the future and he wants to be the one to cash in on all of it. I can't blame Purdie for feeling this way, because if all this did indeed happen, what would you rather have? A one-time payment for a month's worth of session work (recording Beatles drum tracks) and a separate hush-money check or would you choose to rake in the continuing royalties of Beatles recordings? More power to Purdie.

When Ringo is asked about what he thinks about all this, he's got the same damn answer every time – "Then what was I doing in the studio?" Earth to Ringo – it's called a scratch track. On the studio master reels, anyone could have re-recorded over your takes. I find it weird that Ringo didn't even step up to the plate to fight the allegations or even question it. I mean, c'mon – these are Beatles songs we're talking about here! It's unimaginable why Purdie would make up such an outrageous lie to begin with because he had more than enough on his plate for his own career. It's not like he needed the bread. I guess it's not all that important to Ringo...the yutz. It would be hysterical to see all of this unravel one day, because I have two words for Ringo Starr – Charlie Watts, bitch, CHARLIE WATTS! Hell, Tommy Ramone should have taken over Pete Best's job – at least maybe The Beatles could have had more balls. Or balls at all, for that matter.

Anyhoo, there's my two cents on some of the more underlying punk-spirited drummers. Even though they didn't bash it out with bands ushering in the punk explosion starting in the late '60s, it's all still there to see, but more importantly, to hear. Still skeptical? Let me leave you with just a few names of punk-driven drummers that I'm sure most of you will recognize: Marky Ramone of the Ramones, Jerry Nolan of the New York Dolls, Dave Drive of The Gears, Carla Maddog of The Controller, DJ Bonebrake of X, Philthy Phil and Mikkey Dee of Motorhead, Chuck Biscuits of the (ruling) Circle Jerks, DOA, Black Flag, Danzig, and Social Distortion, Bommer of R.K.L., Danny Marcroft of the (mighty) Big Drill Car...and guess what? The above mentioned skin-beaters are honest-to-God true believers of at least one of the "old-school" drummers I have rambled on about here today. Believe it or don't, fucko, that's a fact. Smell you later, suck it easy, and have a big one.

I'm Against It.

—Designated Dale

Designated Dale



The Dinghole Reports



The chili-fueled ruckus rock cut through the punk rock fart fog like a hot safety pin through lard!

The Dinghole Reports

By the Rhythm Chicken
(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

MOVING IS HELL! Every couple of years I find myself getting particularly bored with whichever corner of Wisconsin I'm nesting in and spend weeks criss-crossing the state with carloads of carrets and drumsticks, always keeping a watchful eye for possible Gary Coleman roadkill. My most recent move was from Milwaukee back to Wisconsin's own little Cape-Cod-wannabe, Door County. Door County is the "thumb" of Wisconsin's mitten-like shape, the peninsula that jets out into Lake Michigan. Every May through October, Door County is overflowing with wealthy vacationing Chicago yuppie fucks throwing their cash around (but indirectly funding my ventures). Its small Scandinavian villages hosted many of the early drunken Rhythm Chicken tours. I am now living back in my old Door County coop, the Woodshed. It is literally a one-room shed behind the trashy trailer that houses Ruckus Thomas. The nearest neighbor is the Moravian church a quarter mile up the road. Basically, I gave up my

luxurious two-bedroom Milwaukee coop with a balcony view of Lake Michigan for a one-room shack within walking distance from Lake Michigan AND the bay of Green Bay with no running water and a space heater (which is still in use as of May 29th!). Simplification is bliss. Moving, however, is HELL!

(Enough with the geography lesson, already! Where's the ruckus? - F.F.)

SO, due to my hectic schedule of moving, finishing up night school, trying to give away unnecessary possessions to ease the move, and paying homage to my favorite Milwaukee watering holes, I haven't played a gig since Leipzig, Germany (unless you count this spring's telephone tour from the Woodshed).

[WOW, Mr.. Chicken! That was over 3 MONTHS AGO! - Dr. S.]

(Holy shit! Is the Chicken even the Chicken anymore? Are you hibernating or what? -F.F.)

Leave me alone! I'm a busy bird, all right?! Besides, I will soon celebrate my triumphant return to the county with a Freddy K memorial tour, but more about that later.

[So you obviously don't have any recent concerts to report. Which dinghole will you stretch THIS time, Rhythm Chicken? - Dr. S.]

Luckily, I always have enough documented gigs in my past to pull some gems outta the ol' carrit bag.

[Uh....Mr.. Chicken? You've already misspelled 'carrot' twice, and... - Dr. S.]

—uneasy awkward silence—

SO, today I'm going to discuss the importance of food in the world of punk rock.

[Food? - Dr. S.]

(...but... F.F.)

Yes, food, that basic necessity for survival, can often be seen taking on important roles in the punk rock arena. I've seen Leonard of the Dickies showering the crowd with white bread. I've seen Man or Astroman? launch endless asteroids of Little Debbies at their audi-

ence. I've seen Boris the Sprinkler drench the crowd with gummi worms. I have yet to see the Go-Nuts, but have heard of their snack-rock concerts leaving the audience waist-high deep in snack food. I can only imagine the types of punk rock recipe-swapping parties that go unreported!

(Boy, you're really stretching it THIS time, Rhythm Rooster! - F.F.)

[I'm not quite sure what's getting stretched here. I'm still a little hazy about the whole "dinghole" thing. - Dr. S.]

SO, upon reviewing official Rhythm Chicken sighting documents, I found a few cases of food-inspired ruckus rock in my past. Aside from my regular diet of radioactive birdseed and Pabst, a few culinary carryts have crossed my performance platter.

[It's spelled "carrot," C-A-R-R-O-T, carrot. - Dr. S.]

Dinghole Report #20: Ruckus Fueled by Rhythm Chili!

(Rhythm Chicken sighting #140)

Green Bay's Rock'n'Roll Highschool was hosting another star-studded evening, Bantam Rooster, Zeke, and the New Bomb Turks. All that was needed for a well-rounded evening of ruckus was a Rhythm Chicken appearance. However, Chicken sightings at Turks' shows have become somewhat common. I needed something to "spice up" the show. I started brainstorming for spices. Hmmmm ...cumin, ...cilantro, ...garlic, ...cracked black pepper,.... A. HA! Chili powder!!! Yes! That was it! CHILI! This was Green Bay, home of Chili-John's! Green Bay-style chili! Green Bay-style chili is a lot like a flavorful black tar, heavy and dense with beef, no vegetables. As Uncle Itchy says, "Vegetables aren't food! Vegetables are what food EATS!"

I showed up early to get a good merch table near an electric outlet, plugged in the Nesco hot pot, and began heating up the first ever batch of....RHYTHM CHILI! I put up my "prices": Rhythm Chicken newsletters - free. Rhythm Chili - \$2/bowl. Whatta deal! The back of the venue was soon filled with the haunting aroma of Rhythm Chili. The doors were opened and in came the punks. They were hesitant at first, but soon formed a hungry line after witnessing Zeke's roadie inhaling a bowl of the meat-heavy tar. The other merch tables could only offer shirts, CDs, stickers, etc... Only the Rhythm Chicken could satisfy your hunger for ruckus rock AND chili! All twenty-one bowls of

The legendary Freddy K.



Rhythm Chili were sold. The venue's sound system could barely squelch out the chorus of chili farts from the punks. The Rhythm Chicken strives to satisfy ALL your senses, baby! Then, just moments before the Turks took the stage, the ladies room erupted with the audio ruckus riot! The crowd squeezed towards the shutter door to catch a glimpse of the chef. The gin-soaked rhythms flowed from the girlie shitroom like molten hot ruckus!

[AGAIN?! - Dr. S.]

(OK, Chicken! Now your plagiarizing YOURSELF!!! - F.F.)

[Plagiarizing yourself? But... - Dr.S.]

All right, all right!....The chili-fueled ruckus rock cut through the punk rock fart fog like a hot safety pin through lard!

[Hey, Chicken. Did you ever consider writing for Hallmark? - Dr.S.]

(Or maybe *Bon Appetit*? - F.F.)

—uneasy awkward silence—

SO, the Turks' started rockin' the main stage. End of Rhythm Chicken show. I packed up the Chicken kit in the Rooster Roller, enjoyed the rest of the Turks' set, and drove two hours up to Door County to catch last call at JJ's La Puerta. The cook always gets his shift drink.

Dinghole Report #21: The Rhythm Chicken Bakesale/Foodfight (Rhythm Chicken sighting #138)

Friday nights are usually drunk and chaotic at Milwaukee's Cactus Club, but a certain Friday night was exceptionally so. Local garage-rock favorites, the Mistreaters, were playing their CD-release show and formally requested a ruckus appearance of the poultry kind. I was even on the flyer! (boyish squeal) Since this was one of those rare "scheduled" performances, the element of surprise was lost. I needed something to make this performance stick out, something to really stimulate the senses. I needed something to conceptually CRUSH the competition. Then it came to me. OF COURSE! A RHYTHM CHICKEN BAKE-SALE! Everyone loves cookies! The night before the show I bought two rolls of that Pillsbury shape and bake cookie dough and a big bag of M&Ms and brought them to my sister's house. Not only did she have the proper baking equipment, but three children to fill up the production line, ages eight, seven, and four. Child labor, cheap and easy! The cookies were shaped like chicken heads with M&M eyes and noses. They had that child-like retarded emo look that would make all the drunk garage rockers go, "Aaaw, how cute!" The supplies cost me under \$12. It made thirty-six cookies for me to sell at \$1 apiece. I was gonna be rich! That's right! The Rhythm Chicken's a sellout! I do it all for the money!

Somehow, I ended up with three roadies that night, probably for my three piece Chickenkit, I suppose. Lord Kveldulfr, Ruckus O'Reilly, John Burger, and I rounded our corner of the bar and soaked up pitcher after pitcher after pitcher after pitcher after pitcher after



The infamous Woodshed

pitcher of Point Special Beer. I even made a sign that said, "FUCK ON!" I was sick of fuckin' off and decided it was time to turn things around a bit. John proudly hoisted the "FUCK ON!" sign, repeatedly reminding the concert-goers to "KEEP ON FUCKIN'!!!" This is where my alcohol-enhanced swiss cheese memory kicked in. I remember the Kill-a-watts finishing up and the Mistreaters taking the stage. The joint was packed. I remember singer Christreater addressing the sea of heavy-metal-devil-horn hands, "We are the Mistreaters!.....but first, THE RHYTHM CHICKEN!" and that's about the limit of MY memory for that night. Luckily, my road crew were able to piece together random bits of THEIR memories of the night.

Lord Kveldulfr claims it was the worst, drunkenest, and sloppiest Chicken gig he's ever witnessed. Apparently, I was having a little trouble executing flawless rhythmic perfection while drunkenly falling over onto my drums. Go figure. Other sources claimed that my inability to simply PLAY my drums angered me into yet another wrestling match against the drums. If you can't beat 'em, beat 'em. I'm not sure, but it's possible that the drums might've won that match. No matter. There was still a whole room full of PEOPLE to wrestle, which I guess I did. I heard that a girl in the audience ran to Eric the owner/doorman complaining that "some drunk guy in a rabbit head is tackling people and falling down a lot!" Eric peeked in and calmly replied, "Oh. That's just the Rhythm Chicken." The girl stormed off. I woke up hours later on my coop's living room floor all bruised up in my beer-soaked spandex biking shirt.

[You're lucky you're from Wisconsin, or some people would say you have a problem. - Dr.S.]

(Hey! What happened with the bakesale? - F.F.)

Well, I think I sold maybe two cookies, and the rest of them fueled some type of drunken punk rock food fight. Yup! I completely lost my profit margin in the name of ruckus!

SO, back to Door County news. It is with the deepest sadness that I tell you of the recent passing of Door County's polka king, Freddy K. Fred Kudanko was eighty-nine. He lost his driver's license some fifty years ago. He could often be seen driving his tractor to the AC Tap tavern daily. I've heard that there exists no law about driving a tractor drunk since it is categorized as a farm tool. He was once quoted as saying, "I've never had a girlfriend longer than thirty minutes!" Freddy K was the self-proclaimed polka king of Door County. He would arrive at various local festivals and baseball games wearing a blue cape and a home made crown composed of tinfoil, wire, and leftover blue cape material. He would choose a high-traffic area and set up his folding chair. Here he would play polka cassettes on his junky boombox and play along with home made wooden noisemakers for the enjoyment of passer-byes. The guy was brilliant! I like to think that, in some ways, there's a lot of Freddy K in the Rhythm Chicken. In the days to come I will be embarking upon the Rhythm Chicken's Freddy K Memorial Tour, a twenty-one carat salute to the Door County Polka King!

[CARROT! C! A! R! R! O! T! CARROT!!! - Dr.S]

Well, the last time I trusted my spellchecker it suggested that "dinghole" should be replaced with "DUNGHILL"! To tell the truth, I'm somewhat impressed that my spellchecker's word bank includes the word "dunghill." OH! If all goes as planned, by the time this sees print, you should be able to visit <www.rhythmchicken.com> or <www.rytmkuczcz.com> to get the skinny on the bird..

[My first editor's note! While spellchickening this one, it suggested that Christreater should be "Crist eater!" Chris'll dig that one! - Dr.S.]

-The Rhythm Chicken
<rhythmchicken@hotmail.com>

BEN HAMPER

RIVETHEAD



INTERVIEW & ILLUSTRATIONS BY MADDY TIGHT PANTS

Chances are, you're either a huge Ben Hamper fan or have never heard of him. In my group of friends, beat-up copies of his book, *Rivethead*, have been making the rounds for years. I know people who own several copies just to loan 'em out to their friends. Go to the Triple Rock (a punk bar in Minneapolis) and mention the word "Rivethead" and you'll find yourself with several new friends before the night is over.

Why all of this excitement? Well, *Rivethead* might just be the best book about working written in the past, I dunno, hundred years. Hilarious, incredibly well-writ-

ten, and so much fun to read, *Rivethead* is the story of Ben Hamper's life on the assembly line for General Motors in Flint, Michigan. Filled with stories of worker sabotage, drinking, Ben's factory-themed punk band (Dr. Schwartz Kult), and a promotional giant cat named Howie Makem (who roams the factory "inspiring" workers in one of the worst human resources' decisions of all time), this book has already become the working punk's Bible. I thought it was about time to introduce *Razorcake* readers to the man, the myth, the legend, Ben Hamper.

Maddy: What are your favorite work scams?

Ben: Naturally, not showing up for work was near the top of the list. There was a doctor near our plant who used to charge fifteen dollars for a medical excuse. Frequently, it looked like he was running his own assembly line. You'd walk into his office and he'd already be writing out your slip. You'd have to check it on the way out just to see what malady you had. "Hmmm, appears I have a sore back today," or "Diarrhea? If you say so!" Other than scamming to miss work entirely, I'd have to say drinking on the job was a personal favorite. I recall several Friday nights in the factory where we were having so much fun that it seemed like an annoyance to have to leave at quitting time and relocate to an actual bar.

Maddy: Have you ever read *Scam* zine?

Ben: I haven't read *Scam*. I'll just assume it's not endorsed by either GM or the UAW (United Auto Workers).

Maddy: What's better? A job you like but can't scam or a job you hate with lots of scamming possibilities?

Ben: Well, I suppose if you had a job you liked, scamming wouldn't be a huge priority. Not that I've had any experience with that kind of set-up. On the other hand, I think it's crucial for one's survival and self-image to employ scams on a dreadful job. I always perceived it to be a war within a war. They could have my effort and labor, I could cash their paychecks, but I also needed to create a situation where I felt there was some form of exploitation of the overall format. To use a phrase from the book, "It's like being paid to flunk high school the rest of your life."

Maddy: Yeah, and a really good work scam is often fun! I often think that, if I ever get a real job, I'll miss all the constant thoughts of, "What can I get away with?" Working a shit job while undermining it is, I think, many times more fun than a "serious" job doing something I care about. Plus, what would either of us write about? Making our first million in some weird corporate position? Boring! On a related note, have you found it harder to write without the daily job experiences for inspiration? Do you ever sit around and think, "If only I had a shitty job again, I could write *Rivethead* Pt. 2?"

Ben: I don't necessarily find it any more difficult to write, though my output might indicate otherwise. I've never been one to just write for the sake of writing. It's nothing I'm compelled to do. However, there's a validity to what you're saying. The factory was an abundant source for material. Perhaps had I continued there I might very well be up to *Rivethead* (zine) #9... though more than likely they would've figured out a way to have toppled a crate of steering gears over on me and nixed that notion. Who knows what the future holds? Rent considerations and an alarming lack of skills could force me back into another shit job at any time. I could reinvent myself as Mufflerhead or Pin Monkey Man.

Maddy: In all of my shit jobs, I've always had some fear that the people I work with/for would discover I was writing about them. Considering that you were once physically threatened by a co-worker you made fun of in print, was writing about your job worth it?

Ben: To my knowledge, all of my co-workers enjoyed the fact that I was bringing an honest illumination to this lame world of ours. The incident you refer to with the hostile linemate was entirely separate. I'd written a rather scathing piece about deer hunting and was stupid enough to include this cro mag I worked with as a main target for ridicule. I learned a valuable lesson that day, which was

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basically — stick to factories and leave rifle sports to someone else.
Maddy: Did you ever worry that GM execs were sitting around reading *Rivethead*?

Ben: Quite the contrary. I was eager for them to read my articles. It was important for me to let them know I would always have my say... if not the last word. There were a few scams I was up to that weren't divulged until after I left the plant and wrote the book. These weren't omitted due to any fear I had of GM brass. It was more a case of self-preserving certain secrets and deceptive acts.

Maddy: Have you ever been approached by any GM higher-ups or lawyers for anything you've written?

Ben: While I worked there, nothing more than an occasional scowl or menacing stare. After the book was published, the only official comment I ever saw was a brief statement a GM spokesman contributed to a *People* magazine article about me. It stated something like, "Ben Hamper

is not representative of the many hard-working people employed by General Motors." This, naturally, was a vast lie. Not so much because I represented the typical autoworker — more because I actually was a hard worker. I just went about it in a manner that was rather atypical, to say the least.

Maddy: Once your writings became popular, you wrote for a bunch of magazines like *Mother Jones* and the *Utne Reader*. What are some of your thoughts on these "alternative magazines"?

Ben: Writing for *Mother Jones* was frustrating. Their fact checkers used to drive me nuts. One time this guy called me up to ask, "Was the North Unit roof that you referred to in your piece actually called The North Unit Roof?" *Pravda* probably allowed for more free expression. As a whole, my experiences with these supposed liberal rags were always the worst. They were claustrophobic in their silly concessions to political correctness. I recall one of these magazines having a problem with my use of the term, "girlfriend." I changed it to "galpal" and they deemed that acceptable. I've purposely avoided these kinds of publications for years. Who needs the bullshit?

Maddy: Seeing as how you make fun of The Boss for pretending to be working class, what's your take on the editors of these magazines being really interested in life on the assembly line?

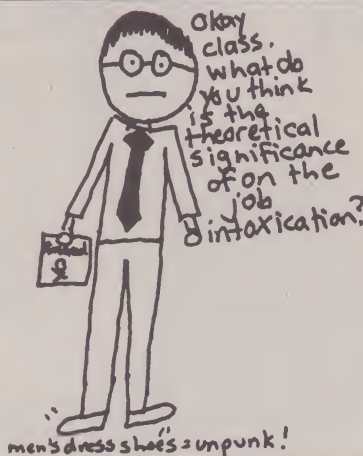
Ben: In my own case, I think they were simply attracted to me as a novelty act. It was like, "Oh goodness, here's a talented wordsmith and he's an actual member of the proletariat!" It was like *Spin* magazine clutching onto some white dork that could rap.

Maddy: Yeah, as an intern for *Utne Reader* (yuck!), I can relate. The things that so many people do everyday — work full-time shit jobs, get drunk, play in bands — seem really novel to a bunch of rich new-agers. At my internship, many people were shocked that I did a zine and wrote for other zines without getting paid! And this from a magazine that says it's about the best of the alternative press? Ack! Did you ever think

of self-publishing a book or doing a zine to get around the *Mother Jones* and *Utne Readers* of the world?

Ben: I was fortunate in the fact I never needed those people in the first place. My income was being provided by GM at the time. The writing was just this sideline thing I did to alleviate some of the boredom and feelings of alienation I was experiencing. I didn't even have plans to write a book. One day, I was sitting around my house and the phone rang. A literary agent said he thought I had a book inside of me. I asked him if he was sure he wasn't holding someone else's x-rays up to the light. Two days later

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he called to say Warner Books would give me forty grand to string my articles into a book. I'll get right on it, I told him. Naturally, the downside to this was that *MRR* wouldn't review the book because it came out via a big evil corporate publishing firm. I'm still in therapy over that disappointment.

Maddy: Do you still hate Bruce Springsteen?

Ben: This is a popular misconception. I do not hate Bruce Springsteen. I think I own a couple of his albums, not that I ever listen to them. In *Rivethead*, I merely used him as an example of how a lot of rock stars were posturing themselves as musical representatives of the working man. Bruce, Seger, Mellencamp.... I found it offensive. My intention was to point this out as a means of coaxing workers to sing their own songs. I'd prefer to hear four shitheads who were familiar with factories or shipping docks describe that mess to me rather than listening to some surrogate trying to manufacture their version of that reality.

Maddy: One of my favorite parts of *Rivethead* was the stuff about music. Phil Ochs once said, "A protest song is a song so specific you can't mistake it for bullshit." On a similar note, maybe a song about working is a song so specific you can't mistake it for bullshit. In *Rivethead*, you write, "Let assembly workers sing about assembly workers. Let waitresses sing about waiting tables. Let garbagemen sing about garbage." I'm really into the idea of specific songs. Did your band write about the specific duties of a riveter?

Ben: Not so much from a riveter's point of view, per se. We did tunes that factory workers in general could've related to — "He's a Suckass," "Drinking Makes Sense," "Rat Like Me," "Are You Going in Tonight?"

Maddy: Were a lot of the factory workers into punk? Ever think about playing a surprise "in-factory show"?

Ben: The GM Truck and Bus plant was hardly a hotbed for punk in any form. I did meet a couple of people who were into it. I started a punk band with one of these guys, Dave Steel. We never really had any desire to play an in-factory show. We valued our health more than that. I recall our main objective at the time was to write a single that could replace any number of the fraudulent "worker" tunes over in the jukebox at Mark's Lounge across the street from the plant. We wrote the tunes but they never appeared on a 45 and only recently showed up in limited CD form. I hear a couple of them will be available sometime in June on mp3.com, whatever that is. Just poke around for Dr. Schwartz Kult if you're interested.

Maddy: Were punks interested in Dr. Schwartz Kult? Do you feel like you fit in with the punk scene, considering a lot of it is younger, middle-class kids?

Ben: Well, it was punk rock, so I would assume so. We never got too far with it. Right about the time we were releasing our tape, two members were transferred to plants outside of Flint and the band just ended. We never even played a live show, though that was due more to the fact both the guitar player and myself were having severe problems with panic disorder at the time. The strange thing is that we're finally scheduled to play our first show in June. These young guys from Flint re-released our tape onto CD last year and have talked me into reconvening the band at least for one show. Should be fun... if I can make out the cue cards.

Maddy: What was the punk scene like in Flint?

Ben: It was quite vibrant back in the '80s and early '90s. I hosted a punk radio show for eight years in Flint and we played a lot of local stuff. There were a number of great bands during this time — The Guilty Bystanders, Dissonance, Political Silence, Dachau Club, Smiling Sacrifice. There were plenty of hall shows and a few bars that featured punk. Flint's always been a fertile area for garage/punk dating back to the days of The Bossmen, Question Mark and The Mysterians, Terry Knight and The Pack. The

Stooges were from just down the road and played Flint often.

Maddy: What's your take on punk rock today?

Ben: From all I can tell, it's still going strong. Right when you think there's a lull, something will come around and kick your ass. Of course, where I'm located now, up here in the boonies of Northern Michigan, there isn't anything more punk than some dick coverin' an REM song on open mic night up at O'Keefe's Pub. Thank god for mailorder!

Maddy: Going on tour with Screeching Weasel — what was it like, how did it come about?

Ben: Being that I was forty-one at the time, it was quite nerve wracking, especially having to sleep on some teenager's basement floor every night and wondering if I'd brought enough Klonopin (for anxiety) to withstand it all. Not to mention having to listen to Ben Weasel condemn me every night for getting wasted and screwing up the merch sales. Actually, it was also a lot of fun, especially when the band was playing. That was Screeching Weasel at their peak. Ben, Jughead, Vapid and Panic — right around the time of *My Brain Hurts*. It came about on a lark. Ben Weasel wrote something in *MRR* asking if anyone knew of my whereabouts. Assuming I knew more than most, I got a hold of him and one thing led to another. I expressed an interest in writing about a punk band on the road, they re-routed the tour to start in Flint and away we all went in that piece-of-shit van of theirs.

Maddy: If the Rivethead could destroy one band, what band would that be?

Ben: The Eagles, without hesitation. In the event they're already dead or retired, I would aim the bazooka squarely at Korn.

Maddy: What are you up to these days? I've heard rumors about more books or even "*Rivethead: The Movie*."

Ben: Basically, I'm living the life of a country rube. I ride tractors, play golf, booze it up, record mixed tapes/CDs, and do the occasional speaking gig at universities using the book in order to help on the rent. I'm working on a Rivethead website that should be up by mid-summer, having cut ties with the one I had via Michael Moore's website. The movie rights to *Rivethead* are currently owned by Richard Linklater who, the last time I spoke with him, still intends to make the film as soon as some studio wises up and supplies the cash.

Maddy: So, did you make a lot of money from the book deal? Should other aspiring punk writers look to big publishing houses to fund their record buying for the rest of their life? Or is it just a waste of time?

Ben: I made good money from book sales. Since the book is still used a lot in universities, I continue to draw decent royalties. Nothing huge, but enough to keep me in booze, cigarettes and Teenage Shutdown comps. The real money was in the sale of the movie rights. That's when I graduated from crayons to perfume, as Lulu once sang. I really have no advice for aspiring punk writers other than stop with the fuckin' tattoos and buy me a beer.

Maddy: How do you feel about *Rivethead* being required reading in many college classes? It must feel strange to know that people are sitting around critiquing class and work through Howie Makem and stories about getting drunk.

Ben: It's certainly nothing I would've ever predicted. I've lost track of how many universities are still using the thing. I received an email the other day from a student at Yale who says they've been using it there. It's both humorous and ironic that all these kids are being forced to learn the ways of the world, at least in an industrial sense, from some lazy ass who flunked high school journalism. All I know is that it keeps the royalty checks coming in, which, in turn, keeps me from washing dishes.

Maddy: Would you ever go back to working in a factory?

Ben: No, thanks.



OUT COLD.

Mark Sheehan: Vocals, guitar Jaye Toothaker: Bass John Evicci: Drums Micah Smaldone: Lead guitar



Interview and posed shot by ReTadd

Live shots by Al Quint

An irony about hardcore punk is that it seems to be fragile. Part of it is design. Attack, ruin, explode, beat the fuck out of everything, yourself included. What's left? Charred remains. Corpses. Think for a second. How many bands in this genre have kept their vision beyond a couple albums without merely retreading the exact same ground or retarding themselves – while still remaining a certifiable hardcore band? (As in there's no modifier needed before the word hardcore, like: melodic, jazzy, or art-damaged.) No fault can be placed on super powerhouses like Minor Threat, Negative Approach, Necros, Los Crudos, Rudimentary Peni, Bad Brains, and Charles Bronson that came in, and exploded city blocks worth of music – leaving both craters for music fans to fall into decades later and stumble over into the unforeseeable future. Yet, bands with true staying power with their initial vision intact for at least a decade, that's another entire category. The pickin's as thin as the bands are deified or completely obscured, and I'm sure some of you are going to disagree, but here's the list I came up with: Black Flag, Seein' Red, The Neighbors, The Freeze, and DOA.

Here's my point. It's tough to come out with one truly great hardcore album and infinitesimally harder to follow it up with four more full lengths, a live record, six splits and EPs and scads of compilation tracks, all of which are phenomenal. Out Cold's done that. Perhaps the greatest trick of all, is that with all that time under their belts, and all of the music they've released that's readily available, they still remain virtually unknown. Shit like that should be illegal.

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Todd: Why is there a period after the name?

John: It kind of gives it definition.

Mark: I don't know how that actually came about, but someone just put it on there on the original logo and it looked really cool, so we always put it on now. It's kind of like our symbol, almost.

Todd: What were your ages when you started the band and how old are you now?

John: '89. I was fifteen, sixteen. Twenty-eight now.

Mark: I was nineteen, twenty. Thirty-two now.

Todd: Why is it that you've toured Iceland, Finland, and Japan and never the United States?

Mark: Our label, Kangaroo, is overseas, so that kind of got us going with the overseas thing. There really hasn't been any interest in the States. Now, it seems to be starting to build up, but there was no real option before.

Todd: How Iceland? I've never heard of hardcore bands just going to Iceland to play.

John: It's kind of through Jaye. He had a friend that lived in Iceland who knows the band Minus (pronounced "mee noose") and, actually, we kicked the idea around a few years ago because Jaye suggested we stop over. Finally, we decided to do it.

Todd: Was it good?

Mark: It was really cool.

Todd: How was your very first tour, years ago, paid for by a record company?

Mark: Kangaroo paid for the plane tickets and the whole bit.

Todd: Have they done anything like that since?

John: It's dwindled away. The second tour, he paid some of it and this tour he said, "No, we can't pay you anything."

Todd: There's been several lineup changes. What's been the most dramatic change in sound when someone new has entered the band?

Mark: [to Jaye] Why don't you answer that because you liked us before you joined the band.

John: How did you fuck us up?

Jaye: I really haven't noticed a major change. The first album (self-titled) seemed a little more punk. The production on the third record, *Warped Sense of Right and Wrong*, was a lot more produced-sounding. I guess. Musically, it's always been pretty consistent, as far as I've noticed.

John: I think the biggest change that's occurred is when Fred left the band. Basically, Mark took

over all the songwriting.

Todd: Fred is your brother?

John: Yeah. Fred, especially in the early years, he had a very Dead Boys, Johnny Thunders influence. A lot of that rock'n'roll stuff got into it, especially on the (self-titled) first record. But, we slowly worked that out. Consciously, we said, "We're getting too rock'n'roll-y. We want to stay a strict hardcore band. So the second (*Permanent Twilight World*) and third albums are more hardcore and when Fred left, it really got even more hardcore, even though we tried to keep one foot in the punk stuff.

Mark: That was one of the reasons why Kevin left the band. He only did the first album with us because he wanted to go totally into a rock'n'roll thing and I think he felt — we wanted to keep it hardcore and I think he felt bothered by that.

John: Creative differences, you know?

Todd: John, what's a "spinach bin" and why is Elton John's *Captain Fantastic and the Brown Dirt Cowboy* in yours?

John: That was this guy from Lowell, who runs a thing called "Statutory Tape." He has a website and through local people, he queried them on their record collections and put it on the web and called it a spinach bin. You know how people used to keep their records in spinach bins? They're just boxes. So, I sent them a list of all my records and I love Elton John, so I had *Captain Fantastic*.

Todd: Has Elton John ever filtered into Out Cold in any way, shape, or form? Have you taken a lyric or, "No one's going to notice this drum fill right here?"

John: Actually, no. Honestly.

Mark: We've done stuff like that, though. We're such huge pop music fans, you know what I mean? You always try to write your songs to be catchy and every once in a while, you take a lyric from something that you know no one's going to know but it's like a little private joke and if someone ever does bring it up to you, you'll be psyched because they're a fan, too.

Todd: From what I've understood from your previous interviews, you want to keep the vision of Out Cold pure. What exactly is that vision?

Jaye: Really angry, straight-forward hardcore that doesn't deal with political lyrics. It deals more with shit that's going on with us.

Todd: And how does that vision differ from Alien Blood

Transfusion and 13 Ghosts (two other bands that members of Out Cold are in)?

Mark: We three are all in 13 Ghosts and John and I are in Alien Blood Transfusion, which is more kind of like anything goes. We're such music fans, we needed something that wasn't structured as tightly as Out Cold that we could do whatever. Stuff like the New Bomb Turks or Dead Boys or any of our other influences. And Jaye actually started 13 Ghosts.

Jaye: 13 Ghosts started out in Maine when I was still living up there, and then lineup change after lineup change, I ended up with these guys in the band. I've always wanted to keep that straight-forward, too. I love old surf rock and a lot of new surf rock, too.

Todd: Have you guys ever done a hootenanny bill where you do one

Mark: The manager owns the name. That's weird, huh.

Jaye: And they play more reggae than they do hardcore now, too. They hardly play any of their old stuff.

Todd: I was thinking of Agnostic Front, but they broke up for awhile.

Jaye: And they turned into a thrash band.

Mark: I don't know. I guess we've always wanted to play the same. We want to have our last album sound like our first album. We never had a problem putting out the same record over and over again. Not exactly the same, but variations on the same theme, 'cause we always want to be the hardcore band where you could pick any record and you'll always like it. There won't be a, "Oh, that's when they started to go this way."

Todd: There's never going to be

Why haven't the themes of anger and desperation been resolved?

Mark: Because we're fucked up.

Jaye: Because we're still alive.

band, then the second band, then the third band — all in one night?

John: No. Actually, Alien Blood Transfusion's never played live, ever.

Mark: It's almost kind of like a recording project.

John: I think it's more that by the time we got ready to play out, Out Cold was so active that we didn't have the time to focus on it.

Todd: Is it true that you're now currently America's longest, continually running hardcore band that puts out records? If not, who do you think is?

Mark: I don't know. I wonder if we are America's longest running hardcore band.

John: Can't be.

Jaye: It's a tough call, too, 'cause a lot of hardcore bands turn into metal bands or whatever kind of band after awhile.

Mark: You could say Poison Idea, even though, supposedly they're still together without Pig Champion. But I don't like their last couple of records. They're too metal.

John: How about the Bad Brains? They never really, officially broke up, did they — even though they're in a different form now?

Todd: They can't perform under the name Bad Brains though. It's Soul Brains, sometimes.

like SSD's *How We Rock?* No Bad Religion's *Into the Unknown* (currently the only Bad Religion album unavailable through Epitaph that was initially released by the label)?

Mark: Never.

Jaye: The most disappointing thing to me when I was younger, first getting into music, I'd really like a band like — two good examples are Suicidal Tendencies and DRI — their early stuff. They turned into complete garbage after awhile. I never want to do that.

Todd: Especially when you're first starting off to get records, you're like, "Corrosion of Conformity. I'll pick that up." And then you listen to it and go, "What the hell?" You're not conscientious enough to look at the year it was released.

John: It's one of the first things I look at. Band. Year.

Todd: Jaye, you have to respond to this and this is a direct quote about you joining Out Cold: "Jaye Toothaker has jumped on every other trend from emo to street punk to that Victory garbage and I guess now it's thrash." That's from www.vitalmusic.net.

Jaye: I've always hated emo music. I used to play in a metal hardcore band for a while, and

that's just because I grew up with the guys and they had the band going and asked me to sing.

Todd: What was that band?

Jaye: Polyglot. Living in Maine, there aren't a whole lot of things to do, so I thought it would be fun to play in it. And I do like some bands in that genre — not a lot of them — but I listen to what I listen to. I've never gotten out of any kind of music, either. I still like old metal. I like punk. I like country music. Surf rock. Rockabilly. I'm into all that. If someone's says I'm jumping on bandwagons

name as someone in England and still tour and stuff, we thought it would just be better — 'cause we're planning on touring there — to change the name before we put out a full-length record and started touring.

Todd: Since you do stuff with CJ Ward, how does he feel not being included with the Ramones' induction to the Rock'n'roll Hall of Fame?

Mark: He thought it was just supposed to be the original Ramones: Johnny, Joey, Dee Dee, and Tommy. They were the ones that

angrier, more intense punk rock.

Todd: What has been the longest running threat to your definition of hardcore?

John: Metal influence.

Mark: Yeah. That whole New York scene from '89 or something. When you tell people you're in a hardcore band, they immediately think you have these metal breakdown things. I haven't even heard those bands. I stopped going to shows before then because the shows were so stupid.

John: Actually, that's a little outdated. The past few years, every-

sive pop rock. Personally, I love the later Government Issue records. It's a totally different world. That's fine but don't call yourself a hardcore band anymore. Call the kettle black.

Todd: Mark, you did extremely early stuff with GG Allin. Did he ever ask for a hug from you?

Mark: Yeah, GG hugged me before.

Todd: What's the most un-GG-like behavior that you experienced with him?

Mark: Him playing with my dogs. He wasn't very GG-like. It was very friendly.

Todd: He never flung poop at you?

Mark: No, no. He was just a friend. He accepted me for who I was and I accepted him the way he was. He was just someone with a really good sense of humor and very nice, funny, and very knowledgeable about a lot of things. You could talk to him about anything. Very articulate.

Todd: What do you think was the catalyst for his big change in personality?

Mark: First of all, going to prison. After he got out of prison, he was going more crazy, but I think it really was his bizarre upbringing. Something was a real demon in his personality and he was constantly trying to get it out of him.

Todd: What's the last book that you read that you'd recommend? It can be any type of book.

Mark: I read the Johnny Thunders biography, which I really like.

John: *Coming Out of the Ice* by Victor Herman. It's about this guy — his family moves to Russia in the '30s and he got sent to the prison camps in Siberia. It was the most incredible story I've ever heard. It makes you feel like you're living the life of an absolute king, the shit that guy went through.

Jaye: I think the last book I read — I don't read as much as I probably should — it's probably the book, *Ed Gein: Psycho* documentary. That was all right. There was a lot of stuff they left out. I've read a lot of other stuff that was better, more just even in magazine articles and stuff. Most of the books I read now aren't fiction. I have a lot of serial killer books.

Todd: What are your current jobs?

Mark: I do laundry at a hospital. I've been doing it for years. I just deliver clean linen to the floors. It's awesome. It's just a nice job. I'm alone all the time.

Most people into punk and hardcore aren't music fans. They're genre fans.

OUT COLD.

just because I'm open-minded to music, it sounds like they're pretty close-minded.

Todd: And, no offense, but Out Cold's not a big bandwagon.

Jaye: Oh, not at all.

Mark: The thing is, too, that's why Jaye works in the band so well 'cause he's such a music fan. We all listen to different types of music. It's weird. In the hardcore or the punk scene, the second you like anything else or kind of show an interest in something else, then all of a sudden you're abandoning it. But you never hear those people complain about the bands that put out so many shitty records but are still touring that only put out one good record. It's weird. Most people into punk and hardcore aren't music fans. They're genre fans.

Todd: I believe a little bit of it comes with age. I tend to trust people who have been into punk longer than a year or two — because they seem to have more reference points. They draw from more things. I know so few people who can listen to thrash 24-7. You're just going to turn to jelly.

Mark: And how can you call yourself a music fan if that's all you like? Jaye, he likes so many different types. I really barely ever listen to hardcore. There's just very few bands I like.

Todd: Mark, why did The Warm Jets (a band that Mark is in with CJ Ward/Ramone) change their name to Bad Chopper?

Mark: No one said anything to us about it, but what happened is we realized there was a band, years ago, called The Warm Jets in England and even though it's really weird — you can have the same

started the band and they were the ones that should just been in it. When Marky heard he said that, he got really mad and was like, "Well, I'm important, too." And then Johnny really wanted CJ involved with it because he told *The Village Voice* that he considered CJ more important than Mark because he was the front man and that started a lot of weird infighting, 'cause Johnny considers — besides the original members — CJ the most significant member.

Todd: How did you get involved with CJ?

Mark: I've always been a big Ramones fan and my buddy Jim used to work for them and he kind of hooked us up and it just kind of started like that. With a friendship.

Todd: Have you ever had any nicknames growing up?

Mark: [to John] Mr. Nosey.

John: That was never a nickname.

Mark: [surprised] Oh, really?

John: That was just a shirt I wore.

Mark: I thought everyone called you Mr. Nosey. Fred told me he called you Mr. Nosey.

Jaye: Jaye's a nickname for Jason. It was something my friend came up with in high school. It kinda stuck.

Todd: This is basically for the benefit of someone who's looking at the term for the first time. How you define what hardcore is? What are some defining elements that you have to have for you to be considered hardcore?

John: I think hardcore, according to my definition, is basically very intense punk rock turned up with speed. A little faster, a little bit

one's become very conscious of it now. "Hardcore is '82. Minor Threat." But, a few years ago, it was a big thing.

Jaye: Obviously, people come up with all sorts of different definitions. There's hardcore techno. It seems like anyone can call themselves a hardcore band.

Todd: Looking at it from a different perspective, what instrument can not, under any circumstance, be used for hardcore music?

John: Harpsichord.

Mark: I can't picture it being done with a banjo.

Jaye: I don't think anything besides guitar, bass, and drums.

Todd: Okay, what about bands like Marginal Man that start out pretty fast, then slowly add poppier elements to their music. What do you call that?

Mark: Like the Subhumans, where they would start as hardcore and they'd do the *Worlds Apart* thing? See, it's weird. I like all aspects of it. I don't consider *Worlds Apart* a hardcore album. It's a pop album, but I still like it because it's catchy. I can understand a band progressing as long as it seems like it's natural progression and the songwriting didn't suffer. They were still writing really catchy songs. They just grew. That seems like a natural thing for some bands and I have no problem with that. Trend-jumping is what I've always had a problem with. With Out Cold, we've always made a conscious effort not to change. But some bands don't feel that way.

John: Like Government Issue. That's a classic example of a band starting out as totally raging hardcore and going complete progres-

John: I'm a mechanical draftsman.

Todd: What kind of projects have you been doing?

John: Mostly, the stuff I do is basic, like enclosures. Real unexciting stuff on the computer. I don't think anyone does hand drafting anymore.

Mark: Weird, huh. It's like a lost skill, if you think about it.

John: We do CAD (computer assisted design) and solid modeling. We actually build things in three dimensions. Instead of drawing views of it, you build it in the computer.

Todd: What's the most exciting thing you've ever drafted?

John: I've worked on drawings for warheads. It's not like I built it from the ground up, though, I just made changes to it and stuff.

Jaye: I get as much time off as I need. That's probably why I stay there and while I'm there I get so frustrated. I think it helps when we play live.

Todd: John, do you drink?

John: Yeah, a little bit.

Todd: How many of the Schlitz twelve-pack 7" holders have you sold through your record company, Acme?

John: Five, maybe.

Mark: He's not a heavy drinker.

John: One person bought four. That's basically all postage money. It's kind of expensive to send them.

Todd: Do you fancy them up at all? Use duct tape?

John: I put in a cardboard brace so it's sturdy and tape up the sides. One day something clicked in my head, "Oh, that's about the

incident." I don't like driving with him. It makes me nervous.

Mark: I've had a lot of people die on me in the last couple years. Having any more people exit my life is something that I worry about. I don't really need any more losses right now.

Todd: What are the most prevalent themes in your music?

John: Frustration, depression, anger, desperation.

Todd: Why haven't those themes been resolved?

Mark: Because we're fucked up.

Jaye: Because we're still alive.

Todd: Do you think it's environmental or chemical?

Mark: Probably a little bit of both. With me, I think it's definitely a chemical thing and I think it's just a way I was brought up and we kind of just fed off of each

some pretty crazy shit with this type of music. GG was a good example of that. You've just got to be careful with it.

Mark: I don't see it like that. I'm totally doing it for me. You want people to like it and stuff. It is very powerful, but I never restrict what I say or anything like that, so people don't get the wrong message. It is a very powerful thing with me. The thing that's always been my one on-going friend is the music.

Todd: How is it that *Will Attack If Provoked* is your fastest record and you're older?

Mark: Do you think it's our fastest record?

Todd: Yeah. And meanest.

Mark: I don't know how that happened. I think as the albums went on, it got more focused. By



WILL ATTACK IF PROVOKED

Jaye: I put price tags on CDs at Newbury Comics. I've been there four years and I'm probably more bored at my job than anybody.

Todd: Do you think that the jobs that you have help or hurt the music that you make?

Mark: Mine helps. I bring my guitar into work and play. I wrote most of the last Out Cold album (*Will Attack If Provoked*) at work. I can play my amp and no one even knows I'm over there. All my lyrics and stuff. Everything.

Todd: Do you try material out on invalid patients?

Mark: When I'm up on the floors, I keep it low key. I try to get in and out of there as quick as possible and get over my own little world.

John: I've got to say that my current job is probably hurting, only because I'm sitting at a desk all day, my body's deteriorating, I'm losing my stamina, but I'll overcome it.

size of a 7"," and I tried it. Perfect.

Todd: Everyone has to answer this. What are you most nervous about?

Mark: I'm a wreck. I don't even know how to answer.

Jaye: I'm not a very nervous person. Not being able to pay my rent, my bills, and day-to-day shit, probably, are the biggest things. My job doesn't pay shit. Every time we go on tour, I have to borrow money off of these guys.

John: When I drive with my father. He drives like a maniac and he doesn't wear glasses. He should be wearing glasses. I kind of close my eyes a lot when we're in the car. Let my body go limp.

Todd: Has he ever hit anything?

John: Yeah. He's gotten in quite a few accidents. I was in the car once and a cop pulled him over and said, "Listen, someone called in on their cell phone from another car saying there's a road rage

other 'til I turned into a really screwed up adult.

John: Bad processes with dealing with things that probably don't solve things. They just sort of keep things perpetuating, unfortunately.

Jaye: I never really deal with anything. I just get pissed about it.

Todd: Sonically, how do you want listeners to react to the music itself? Not the lyrics, the sound.

John: We want people to feel a frenzied kind of energy. A real intensity. A violent reaction. We don't want people to beat each other up in the pit or that kind of shit, just a real intense reaction.

Todd: Someone explain this quote. "Punk is kind of like a weapon. You have to be careful how you use it."

John: Basically, it's a very powerful form of music. It has a lot of power over me. I just meant by that, you can drive people do

the time we did this album, the songs I was writing, they had to be better than the last album. It's just that really desperate feeling. You know what's going to really do it for you. When you're playing your own songs and you feel like you're just going to just scream or you're going to burst into tears playing them, then you know it has to be a really desperate, anxious record. Anger's one thing, but to make a record desperate-sounding, is what you always go for. That's what separates bands like Black Flag. Other bands, they don't have that anxious sound to them and you always tend to go for the bands that feel the most passionate.

Todd: What do you think the first certifiable hardcore record was?

Mark: [to Jaye] What do you say? The Teen Idles? You're the big record collector.

Jaye: It's hard to say. It's hard for me. In 1980 I was in kindergarten.

DAG NASTY

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I wasn't there to pick up the records.

Todd: What was your first tattoo and did your parents approve of it?

Mark: My first tattoo was really typical. Black Flag. And I had "Hate Edge" written over it and my parents — I don't know, I don't think my father approved of it. He didn't say anything to me. He was a cop... Jaye just got his first tattoo and his mother doesn't know yet.

Jaye: She knows now. She probably doesn't like it. I don't think she really cares. When we were in Wales the last time, someone gave me a tattoo for free so I got the Out Cold logo on my arm.

Todd: What animal are you most scared of and have you ever been attacked?

Mark: Sharks and spiders. They are my two big nightmarish things. Sharks. I can't believe people swim in the ocean. These things can just come up and grab you and they bite you in half. Go to a lake or something.

John: The whole insect species. I hate insects the worst. I was attacked was by Mark's dog. [gesturing to Mark]

Mark: You stuck your hand in his bowl. Years of warning, when he's eating, don't go near him. He's a great dog. He put his hand in the bowl to fluff up his food or something.

John: I was just trying to be playful.

Jaye: I'd have to agree with John on the insect thing, especially spiders. Cockroaches now, after living in my last apartment. The last time I was attacked by an animal was actually by my turtle. He bit me on the lip.

Todd: Were you giving it a kiss?

Jaye: [bashful] Yeah.

Mark: We're big turtle fans, by the way. It's one of our favorite animals.

Jaye: I've had a turtle ever since I was eight years old, I think.

Mark: Micah, too. Micah and I went out last week into a swamp and he dove in and grabbed a painted turtle for me. He's definitely the wilderness guy. He's the one that'll sleep out in a swamp or something. I'm not like that.

Todd: You've said again and again that Out Cold is not a gimmick band, that you're just a bunch of ordinary guys. Do you think that's a detriment?

Mark: It's probably a detriment but I wouldn't feel right about doing anything like that because it's not us. I'd rather that we remain unpopular — we never thought we'd get as far as we did — so we never thought about gimmicks. We took it too serious. It wasn't a fashion show. It was all about the music. I'm a big New Bomb Turks fan and I like them more because they don't have a gimmick.

Jaye: I love the Misfits but it's hard to take them seriously.

Todd: You guys don't like being tagged as a straight edge band. Do you drink at all, Mark?

Mark: No.

Todd: Why do you shy away from that tag?

Mark: We're not really into the label thing. I think it's great if people are straight edge. I don't care if people aren't straight edge. I don't list myself as straight edge. It's just a personal thing for me. But that's another gimmick for other bands. You'll see them in five years and they're doing coke.

Todd: What do you guys do beyond the bands that you're in to support music in other ways? John, you've reviewed records, haven't you?

John: I have but they never got published.

Todd: Didn't you review the Get Up and Go's?

John: Weird shit you come up with! That's the only thing that's been used. It's amazing that you came across that. There's a zine in Wales called *Mass Movement* and he wanted me to write a column for him and I was like, "I'll try." I never got around to writing columns. Instead, I was like, "Let me write reviews," because I really like writing about music, and I sent it, but he never published it.

Jaye: But you do a record company. (Acme)

John: Yeah.

Todd: Mark, who did you interview Johnny Ramone for?

Mark: I've done interviews with all of the Ramones for little college papers. Johnny's very good at giving interviews. He talks very well, has a lot to say, and a lot of interests.

Jaye: The only other thing I do other than actual playing in a band, I go to shows more than these guys do and I buy a shit load of records.

Todd: Name one record that you can not be without.

All: Ooooh.

Todd: All right, five.

Mark: Cheap Trick's first album, The Ramones' first album, T. Rex's *The Slider*, definitely Bowie's *The Man Who Sold the World*, and Man or Astroman's *Experiment Zero*.

John: AC/DC's *Let There Be Rock*, The Beatles' *White Album*, Black Flag's *Damaged*, New Bomb Turks' *Nightmare Scenario*, and Elvis Costello's *Trust*.

Jaye: It is a tough question because there are definitely records I couldn't live without but I don't necessarily listen to them all the time. Bad Brains' *Black Dots*, Misfits' *Static Age*, anything by Hank Williams. Hank Williams is probably my favorite performer, or was. Black Flag's *First Four Years*, any old early Ventures record from the '60s.

Mark: There's so many good Ventures records, too.

Todd: Didn't they release like sixty-two records?

Mark: I think they have ninety-seven.

Jaye: But not all of them are good. They've got crappy ones.

Mark: The '70s ones were disco-ish. They didn't know what to do.

Todd: This may sound kind of fruity, but everyone has to answer this. If there's a flame burning inside of you for Out Cold, what's its shape, color, and how does it stay lit.

Jaye: Wow. That is fruity. I don't even know how to answer that.

Todd: I'm not going to hold your hand or anything. Don't worry. Free hugs later.



OUT COLD.

Mark: Mine's shape is a box. The color would have to be black. It stays lit because there's a faceless person down there shoveling coal into it.

John: Like an open fire, I guess. It's red and it's stays burning because... there's just a lot of fuel there.

Mark: [in funny voice] It's a ragin' kegger.

Jaye: Man, shape? A rectangle like a dead-end alley. Definitely black. What keeps it burning? This is probably one of the least popular bands I've ever been in, but I get more out of this band than any other band I've been in because the music is exactly what I want to be doing and I can relate to the band and the people in the band more than any other thing I've ever done. I'm still going to have these feelings unless I die or I win the Megabucks (a lottery). Even having money, I'd still have these feelings and this band is a good outlet for it.

Mark: Out Cold is a very lonely feeling. That's what the whole thing is. You don't fit into any scene, even in the punk scene. It's like being in high school. We never fit in. We never felt comfortable even around people who were supposed to have liked the same stuff. You're still an outsider even with them. That's what Out Cold is. The ultimate outsider band. A certain degree of loneliness and frustration, that's what keeps it fueling. You are never really at home or satisfied with yourself or anything around you. It seems to be a constant thing and you're always trying to get that out of you, but it never really works. Playing helps. Writing songs and knowing that you're recording great songs, that really helps because you're going to have that release for a little while. It's like knowing a certain private part of you is going to come out and be exposed and be seen as a really strong, significant piece of you. If by no one else, at least by yourself. It's like, all of a sudden, all of the covers are off. There's one feeling of yours and it's not a weak feeling, it's a really strong feeling. Out Cold's definitely a very frustrated band.



THE BRIEFS



The Briefs are bleach-blond barbarians. They eat switchblades and piss chardonnay. They have enjoyed sexual congress with your mother. They are malodorous, stench-ridden, kimchi-reeking villains. They gorge themselves on fish plucked from fish tanks and toilet bowls. They think suntan lotion is a sexual lubricant and can see in the dark. They break into record collectors' homes while they are away at conventions and leave their singles behind. Their friends are cooler than your friends. They shoot toothpaste and gargle bourbon. They'll short-sheet your bed and disassemble your scooter. They are the hardest working punk rock band in America, and they are coming to serenade your tonsils and make your heart hoarse. The Briefs are Daniel J. Travanti and Steve E. Nix on guitar, Chris Brief on drums, Lance Romance on bass and cow balls.

Interview by Money
pics by Retoää
and Money

\$: I'd like each of you to describe for me the moment you knew The Briefs was special.

Chris: I don't think we've figured that out yet.

Daniel: I think last week I was sitting in that motel room when Lance was bending over and his giant cow balls were just hanging there — then I knew. That was the moment I knew we were meant for special things.

Chris: I think it was after the first practice. **\$:** I knew someone was going to say that.

Lance: I think it was when someone wanted to book us or give us a show. That seemed pretty exciting.

\$: You mean without you having to call for it, someone was calling you?

Lance: No, the fact that we got a show because I don't think anyone really anticipated anything other than just doing it for fun in a basement.

Daniel: More often it's the moments that we hate that come to mind.

Lance: Like my large balls.

Daniel: Not those again.

Chris: Why do you have to bring that up?

Daniel: I don't know, it's like seared in my brain.

Chris: Now people are going to want to see them.

\$: I respectfully decline your generous offer.

Daniel: Someone will get a shot sooner or later.

RAZORCAKE 44 \$: You've been described as

throwbacks and a breath of fresh air. Which is more accurate?

Daniel: Throwbacks? Breath of fresh air? I mean obviously we love all that old stuff a lot. And we take from it a lot, too. What do you think Steve E?

[Steve E writes in his notebook.]

Chris: I don't think any of us thought we were doing anything all that new, anyway. So, it's not really a surprise to read but I think it gives people the wrong idea so I don't particularly like it. Sometimes it doesn't bother me, but there have been a few write-ups where people have said it in a negative way.

\$: Do some of the comparisons come from out of nowhere?

Lance: Yeah, we were once described as a ska band, which is kind of cool.

Chris: There's a couple that say they like the keyboard parts, and there's no keyboard.

\$: Maybe they got you mixed up with the Spits or something.

Lance: We're not doing anything new but we're having a lot of fun doing it.

Chris: It's cool when people say, "You guys took me back to when I saw this band in 1979," or whatever....

Daniel: Yeah, especially since we're nowhere near as good as a lot of those bands were....

\$: Like?

Daniel: Foghat.

Lance: Foreigner.

Steve E: Like if you're a blues band you get compared to Robert Johnson.

Lance: Yeah, it's an automatic comparison.

Daniel: Robert Johnson was great and you're just something that's vaguely close to it and maybe that's how we are to something that was really great back then.

Chris: If someone reads that The Briefs sound like this and this and this, then they can go out and buy those old great records. That's cool.

Lance: Then again, we've played in front of people who don't get it at all and they don't care. They just want it to be done.

Daniel: They just want the next emo band to come on.

Chris: We played with Creed somewhere on this tour, I'm pretty sure of it.

\$: I heard SXSW (South By Southwest, a music conference) was an emo orgy.

Chris: It was, but not our show so much.

Lance: We played with the Sons of Hercules. They're old school and they do it very well. And the Original Sinners. Exene's new band. So we did pretty well.

Daniel: Lots of emo everywhere. Here an emo. There an emo. Everywhere an emo.

Lance: There were a lot of bands we played with in weird spots that are basically frat guys who spike their hair on the weekends and want to play punk rock.

Chris: "Hey Chris, remember me? I used to kick your ass! I'm into punk rock now!"

\$: You all take turns singing...

Chris: Right now?

\$: There's no true frontman...

Lance: That's not true. I'm definitely the

frontman. I don't care what these guys say.
\$: Was that a conscious decision or did it just work out that way?

Chris: We didn't have a singer and we were all like: fuck, we'll just do it. I think at first everyone was like, "I'm not going to do it, you do it." Then someone did it. And then someone else did the next one and it just kind of happened like that.

Lance: We were looking for a singer and we couldn't find one. We had a show, a party to play, and so we took turns singing. I think at that point everyone was like: "We're still going to get a singer, we'll just do this show."

Daniel: It's true. We're still looking for a singer. Do you sing?

\$: Only in the shower.

Lance: It's cool because we get to play different songs in different keys. Keeps it different.

Chris: We all sing in the same key but it's different because we're all bad.

\$: Who's the worst singer?

Daniel: Lance!

[Steve E raises his hand.]

Lance: We take turns being the worst singer.

Chris: This week it's Steve E.

Lance: Last week it was Daniel.

Daniel: We've done all these shows and we've had like three days off since March 10 (thirty-five shows in thirty-eight nights). We had this bright idea about not taking any days off and playing every night for six weeks. In hindsight it's not really a very good idea because we're all getting fucked up. Chris and I had to go to the hospital for antibiotics and now Steve E's fucked.

Lance: I got a rash.

\$: Tell me about the songwriting process.

Daniel: We write songs.

Chris: It depends on what records we buy at the time.

Lance: Steve E likes to stay up all night and drink Dr. Pepper. That's how he comes up with his ideas.

[Steve E nods.]

Lance: I'm going to answer for Steve E from now on.

Chris: Steve E likes to wear women's underwear.

Lance: I don't think there's one specific thing, at least for me. I'm not very good at it. Everybody contributes and we fuck around. We try not to spend too much time on one thing. If it works, we can tell right away. And if we all get excited about it, we pursue it until it's done. Just like Eric Clapton.

\$: What's that song "Where Did He Go?" about? That song really creeps me out.

Daniel: It creeps you out? Good. How come? It scares you?

\$: It makes me think of the Green River killer.

Daniel: They caught him.

Chris: Well, supposedly. They caught a guy who killed four of the women who were missing.

Daniel: Was he a cop?

Chris: No. They thought he was a cop.

\$: Because he was targeting prostitutes.

Chris: Yeah, on this strip in Seattle.

\$: Where Steve E used to hang out...

Lance: He worked at a car painting place so he was able to paint his truck different colors all the time. Pretty creepy.

Daniel: Really the song is about Doug Henning, the hippie magician. "Welcome to the wonderful world of magic!"

Lance: It's about something different every time we play it.

Daniel: So you have to pay attention.

Chris: That song creeps me out, too.

Daniel: It scares us all. Just like Eric Clapton.

\$: If you could eradicate one band from the face of the earth so that you also erase all memories of ever having heard them, which band would you choose?

Daniel: If you get rid of Yes, you get rid of Asia too, right?

\$: A two-for-one.

Lance: You get rid of prog rock.

Daniel: You eliminate the whole genre and I hate that shit.

\$: [Noticing two Bob Seger albums on the dashboard] Did you guys bring Bob Seger records with you on the road?

Chris: They were given to us last night.

Check it out. One of them is sealed. I like this. [He removes the sleeve, which pictures Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band in soft leather jackets and pants in strange poses. It's hard not to notice their large asses.]

Lance: Fucking cool.

Chris: What are they doing?

\$: He looks like a young, fat Siegfried.

Daniel: I tried to bust that record onstage and it is, in fact, like a rock.

Lance: And then I went to my knees last night and everyone was like what are you doing? I'd slipped on it!

Daniel: I saw you fall.

[Steve E hands his band choice on a slip of paper to Lance.]

Lance: The Guess Who?

Chris: Steve E!

[Daniel sighs.]

Lance: Who started that whole rap rock thing? Was it Limp

Bizkit?

Chris: I thought it was Anthrax.

\$: It was way before that.

Chris: I'm going to say the Bullet Boys.

\$: It's not like anyone listens to them anymore.

Chris: All those crappy fucking bands that were trying to be metal. I hate that.

Daniel: Like Odin. Wild Cherry.

Lance: Right now I can't stand all that Limp Bizkit shit because it's so over the top.

[Steve E revises his selection.]

\$: Fugazi?

[Steve E nods.]

\$: Wow.

Chris: See, I love Fugazi. They're one of my favorite bands.

Lance: Emo stuff. I'd definitely get rid of emo stuff.

\$: You have to pick one band.

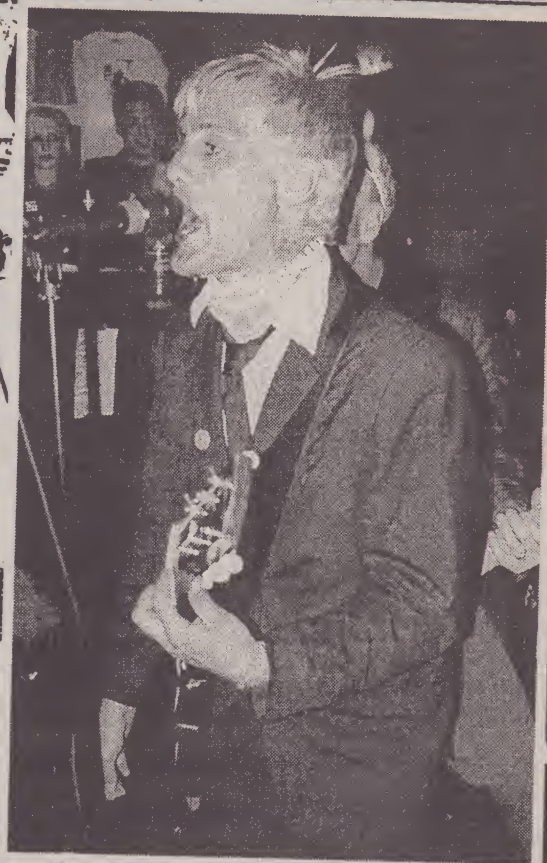
Lance: I guess I'll go with the Doobie Brothers.

Daniel: But if you pick the Doobie Brothers, you lose that cool "What's Happening" episode where they bootleg the Doobies.

Chris: That's a funny episode.

Daniel: And Rerun has the recorder and he gives this big speech... you have no idea

Daniel: It scares us all.



Just like Eric Clapton.



what we're talking about.

S: Not a clue.

Daniel: Just go with it.

Lance: Fuck it, I'm sticking with Anthrax.

S: What are the ingredients of a Swedish taco?

Lance: The primary ingredient, or all of them?

Chris: What is a Swedish taco?

Daniel: Is that a sexual question?

Lance: Because if it is, you're going to have to ask Falcon, our tour manager.

Chris: Lutfisk. That's my answer.

Lance: We're a Swedish taco, aren't we? We've all got blond hair.

Daniel: Natural blond hair.

Lance: Does it involve crepes? I say crepes. [Steve E writes: Lima beans.]

Daniel: Did you just make it up?

S: I'm asking the questions.

Daniel: You don't have to get mad.

S: Who owns the most pairs of shoes?

Daniel: Definitely not me. Lance.

S: And what does that say about him?

Daniel: It says he's got a bag the size of a refrigerator. That's what it says. And nobody likes it and it's going to disappear someday soon.

Lance: It means I have large balls.

Chris: He's got Captain Sensible's shoes. When we were with the Damned one day he threw his huge skateboard-sized creepers into the van and they didn't fit anyone.

Lance: I have a lot of shoes.

Daniel: You wouldn't expect Captain

knows what's in a Swedish taco. Falcon?

Falcon: Pussy.

S: Now that you guys have signed with a major label, I have to ask a few token rock star questions.

Daniel: Okay. Here are the answers. For the money. And because we wanted to.

Lance: And the chicks.

S: Have you ever snorted cocaine off a stripper's ass, taken a bath in champagne, or had carnal relations with an admiring fan in a vehicle larger than my apartment, and if so could you describe these experiences for me?

Lance: How big is your apartment?

S: It's a one-bedroom.

Lance: I had a chick snort coke off my ass while I was riding on the bus.

Chris: I've snorted coke off of Lance's ass.

Lance: Off my balls.

Daniel: No, no, and no.

Chris: We're a straight edge band. We're not into that kind of stuff.

(That's not entirely true: half the band drinks, the other half does not.)

S: What covers do you play in your sets?

Daniel: We do "You Are in My Vision" by Gary Numan sometimes.

S: Really? Wow.

Daniel: We do a Replacements song. A Boys song. WeirDOS song.

S: "Neutron Bomb"?

Daniel: Yeah, but we have to stop doing that.

S: Why?

Sensible to have giant feet because he's British.

Chris: What does that mean?

Lance: It means I have big socks.

S: When I saw you at the Key Club in Hollywood I noticed Steve E had a *Flipside* sticker on his guitar.

Daniel: No, I did. Still do.

S: How come?

Daniel: Because I loved *Flipside* and we got them from Mary. I was always into *Flipside* way more than I was into *Maximum Rock-n-Roll*.

Chris: Those were the only two.

Daniel: I felt like it educated me on a lot of things when I was like thirteen. I thought it was cool. [Falcon pops into the van to get names for the guest list.]

Chris: That guy

Daniel: It's like cheap applause. The WeirDOS are great, but we can't keep doing that.

S: What about the Rotters "Sit on My Face Stevie Nicks"?

Daniel: That would be appropriate.

[Steve E makes an obscene tongue gesture.]

Daniel: That was really gross.

S: Is *The Briefs* an allusion to your sexual performance?

Everyone: [laughs]

Lance: We have a new answer! When people say it's underwear, we can say: "No, it's our sexual performance!"

Daniel: That's good. Thank you for recognizing that. You're very astute.

S: If you guys shoot a video, will you have matching creepers and studded belts?

Chris: I've never in my life worn creepers.

Lance: Steve E and I are the only ones who wear creepers, but we never have matching ones. We're very careful not to match.

S: Isn't being careful not to match the same thing as matching?

Lance: Okay.

Chris: You know, just for that, tonight I'm going to take a shit on stage.

Daniel: And roll in it?

Lance: You have to roll in it.

Chris: There was a show we went to in Iowa City and there was a pile of shit on the stage. We were like: was that for us?

Daniel: That was in Des Moines.

Lance: It was a pile of shit. And it was human.

Chris: "I fuckin' hate those Briefs. I'm gonna shit on the stage."

Daniel: Money's not amused.

S: Complete this sentence: In a perfect world, a dollar from every record and from every ticket would go to _____.

Chris: Swedish tacos.

Daniel: We'll give that one to Steve E.

[Steve E scribbles fast and furiously.]

Chris: We're pretty political so...

Lance: In our pocket.

Daniel: All the nice people at *Razorcake*.

Lance: Falcon's wardrobe.

Chris: Our roadie keeps hitting us up for money. He's been wanting us to buy him an escort.

Daniel: That's probably like three or four hundred dollars.

Chris: Okay, then we can go out and buy some sushi.

Lance: We could use it for that other question about strippers and champagne baths.

Daniel: Or bring *Flipside* back.

S: The first time I saw you guys was with The Spits at the Three Clubs in Hollywood.

Chris: That was a fun show.

S: I've heard all kind of crazy stories about The Spits.

Lance: They're all true.

Chris: Do we have any crazy stories? There are so many.

S: Are they Seattle's favorite dysfunctional band?

Chris: Definitely. Their favorite thing to do is book a show and get a lot of buzz going about it and then not show up.

Lance: Usually because one of them is in jail or rehab.

Chris: It's not like they plan it. One of them will be at home and be like: let's just have a barbecue instead.

Lance: Last show ever.

Chris: That's their favorite.

\$: They put it on their flyers?

Chris: No, they just spread it around.

Lance: "Hey bro, it's our last show."

Daniel: They're not actually brothers in that band. They're lovers.

Chris: On Thanksgiving I managed to get some friends of mine out, like Dave from Scared of Chaka who'd just moved to Seattle, and they put on what was by far their worst show ever and I'd brought all these people there to see them. It was their worst show, but it was their most amazing show. They went across the street to the thrift store and pulled all these old pots and pans and old microwaves from the dumpster. During the show, they'd put the stuff in the microwaves and shit was exploding. The sound guy was freaking out. They were dressed as Kind Diamond-looking freaks.

Daniel: He was Ritchie Blackmore that night.

Chris: That's right. And they couldn't play. Their old drummer used to get completely fucked up and couldn't play at all. There would be twenty minutes of them fighting each other on stage and then three or four

songs that they'd play over and over again.

Daniel: Chris actually played drums with them for a little while.

Chris: Yeah, as a fill-in. I'm the guy they like to talk shit to: the fucking Briefs. Then they'll call me up. Come on, play with us! We love those guys.

\$: Didn't the singer tour with you recently?

Daniel: Sean.

Lance: He traveled around with us for a while. Sean's great. We can call him right now.

Chris: We've been passing our time crank calling people. We managed to get all these numbers. Our favorite thing about being on Interscope is that we were able to get phone numbers for Marky Mark, Kid Rock, all these weird numbers that we've been prank calling. Our roadie Vas will act like this character Rockodile Dundee and he'll sing these songs "Boom Boom Boomerang" and "What's in My Baby's Outback?" and he has the worst possible accent. He's East Indian and he'll go in and out of this weird Australian/East Indian accent. He sings the songs.

Lance: It's amazing. Except we're running out of people to call.

Chris: Some people think it's all right, some people get confused. We won't say who exactly we've called because some of them might live close to here.

Lance: But we're gonna keep doing it, god-

damn it.

\$: So what's next for The Briefs?

Lance: Rent a limousine and some strippers.

Daniel: We go home in like five days after this tour.

Chris: And then we leave again.

Daniel: Then we mix the record that we just did for Interscope. Then we're gonna go back out and hopefully do some shows. And then I don't know what we'll do. Get jobs. Bag groceries. Go back to our normal lives.

Chris: Disappear.

Lance: Wander the streets.

Daniel: We've been talking about it quite a bit.

Chris: I picture Daniel sitting on his front porch with his guitar, throwing rocks at little kids.

Daniel: I do that now.

Chris: Steve E will have his dog-walking business.

Lance: We actually have quite a few singles in the works too.

\$: Different labels?

Lance: Yeah. We're going to get that going. We're going to do a bunch of shows locally. We're going to get something going with Dirtnap and maybe hit the West Coast with the Dirtnap bands like the New Town Animals from Vancouver.

Chris: And The Sleazies. They're one of my favorite bands that we played with on this tour. I don't know what label they're going to be on, but definitely keep your eye out for them.

Daniel: We have this fantasy about doing this great Dirtnap tour with The Spits and The Epoxies. Rotate the line-up so nobody knows who's playing first or last. That's our fantasy.

\$: Like the Warped Tour.

Daniel: Is that how that is?

\$: It usually changes every venue.

Lance: This will be a lot less organized.

Daniel: And we'll have corporate sponsors like Campbell's Soup.

\$: Is Interscope going to release your stuff on vinyl?

Lance: We're working on that.

Daniel: They said they would.

\$: Yeah, but...

Lance: If they don't do it, somebody will, even if we do it ourselves. We'd be foolish if that didn't happen.

Daniel: I want it on vinyl.

\$: You're all big record collectors right?

Daniel: Yeah, I mean I would personally like to own a copy of the record. I think we can make it work. They've been cool about letting us do singles with other people, we'll see...

Lance: We'll be a lot wiser in a year.



RAZORCAKE 47

\$: Tell me about the songwriting process.



Daniel: We write songs.

FLESHIES



interview by Chris Ziegler

photos by Andy Harris

You know you've got one special little body part that really likes rock'n'roll the best. Of all the lumps of muscle and knots of nerves you got sloshing around in there, there's that certain sweaty slab of flab that really sparks up when you hear that first power chord ring out. Though I might not know exactly where yours is — though if you give me five minutes, I can perform a quick examination — I will tell you this: whether it's between your legs or behind your eyes, it's gonna find something in Fleshies (no "the," just "Fleshies") to make it burst a vein and die happy. These four cheerful fuck-offs from Oakland can and do win the hearts and minds of Marines and Marxists alike, with big ugly Turbonegro-rhino-fucks-Hickey riffs for the meat-or-metal-heads and smart, socio-aware and bitterly sarcastic lyrics from singer John Geek (or Johnny No Moniker or Johnny Pseudonym or whoever he is when talking to the media this week). They've got some kinda what-the-fuck? magic that'll penetrate your homeland security defenses sooner or later, especially if you see 'em live. That's when I surrendered. Maybe that's when they got Old Man Biafra, too — you know, with their nakedness and their political pot-shooting and their don't-make-'em-like-that-anymore personality, the kind more bands had before they discovered how

to sue — and maybe that's why Fleshies put out their most recent LP, *Kill the Dreamers's Dream*, on Alternative Tentacles. I caught the band in a party mood with a dose of Dr. Crow (one part Old Crow, two parts Dr. Pepper; slide down into a drainage ditch and serve) and let my special little body part take over from there.

John Geek: Vocals.
Matt-O-War: Guitar.
Brian Hamiltrom: Drums.
Vonny Bon Bons: Bass.

Chris Z: Has irony completely ruined your life? How so or why not?

John: Irony is like slamming a trampoline with a hammer which has a rubber head and a sharp back end pointed at your face. But hey, I didn't really need that eye anyway.

Chris Z: When did you guys get your first punk rock haircuts?

Matt: I got my first mohawk a year ago, on tour.

Chris Z: Was it an ironic mohawk? Or a real "punk's-not-dead" mohawk?

Matt: I don't even know what happened. Me and brother were shaving my head for tour, and I didn't know he took the guard off on the clippers, and I was like, "No, you gotta go shorter on the sides," and I took the clipper to the side of my head and made a big line. So I was like, "Ah, fuck it."

John: For like two days in ninth grade, I

had the total Sid Vicious spiky thing going on. Because it was like "Crazy Hair Day!" at school and I decided to keep it for a day after that because I decided it looked pretty cool. But then I realized it was really high maintenance and I said, "Fuck it."

Matt: I got a half-mullet from some guy in Asheville one time. I was really drunk and I decided to get a haircut, and this guy did this thing: it was kind of like a Wolverine thing, with like a half-mullet in the back.

Brian: A mullet-hawk!

Chris Z: That sends a lot of mixed messages.

Matt: I had a great mullet, man. In high school.

John: Up until what grade?

Matt: I probably had it 'til I was sixteen. Between fourteen and sixteen.

Brian: I had a devil-lock.

John: I think all of us had mullets at one point.

Vonny: I never did!

John: I actually had to tell my dad to get a haircut at one point. He didn't realize it, but he had this really ridiculous mullet.

Chris Z: How'd you break it to him?

John: I was like, "Dad, you live in El Sobrante, and all the auto mechanics and speed freaks and the people sitting in their front yards at two in the morning doing nothing? Well, they all have the same haircut as you." And he got really upset about that. And then he cut it off — he couldn't deal.

Chris Z: So what's the teenage psychology that goes into a bad haircut?

Matt: I was just trying to be a dirthead, but at the same time, I wanted to be an innovator — like a dirthead innovator. Like, "It's gonna be short, but long!" I thought it was gonna be pretty rad. But then I realized — after looking around me and seeing all the other mullets and realizing what kind of dipshits had them — that it kind of upset me. I was trying to take the mullet in a new direction, and it didn't quite work.

Brian: The problem with the mullet — it's proof you can't have your cake and eat it, too. Because you're going for too many haircuts.

John: But the thing is, mullets are played out now. It's all about the "industrial asshole" haircut. Where it's all long and then shaved around the sides, like all the way up. **Vonny:** "The Rammstein."

Matt: People who listen to industrial music, play D&D.

John: And shoot up their classmates.

Chris Z: Trenchcoat Mafia style?

John: Yeah! I think America needs to start picking up the Trenchcoat Mafia style.

Matt: They actually made those D&D people scary for a while.

John: I hate those guys because they failed in being able to crash the plane into New York, like they'd been talking about.

Chris Z: Yeah, it's too bad that Americans couldn't pull that off. I guess we just didn't want it bad enough.

John: [in an "all-American" voice] Yeah, it took twenty of them damn foreigners to take out some big-ass buildings!

Vonny: Me and my housemate were gonna drive our car into the side of a fire-training tower. As a political statement.

John: It's a great way to go.

Chris Z: So is America ready for some good terrorism jokes yet?

John: I don't know. Do you think people got the joke in that thing in *The Onion*? [Fleshies did a "Justify Your Existence" for *The Onion* in January.] We got in some trouble for that.

Chris Z: What did you say?

John: I think the thing that pissed people off the most was saying we promised to dedicate absolutely zero percent of our profits to victims of the terrorist attacks.

Vonny: I think that's funny.

Chris Z: Yeah, we're in California — what do we care? It was just more action footage on TV.

John: [sarcastically] Exactly!

Vonny: Well, we were there right after it happened. It was like a warzone. Like a volcano blew up.

John: It was like the 14th.

Chris Z: And the show still went on?

Brian: Well, they cancelled it, but they still let us play. We played a few blocks from where it was.

Chris Z: What was it like?

Brian: Such a weird smell.

John: Bodies, asbestos...

Brian: ...metal, plastic...

John: The posters were really depressing. It was really sad — it made me sick. I knew that within days there would be some horrible response that would end up resulting in about the same amount of innocent people killed somewhere else.

Chris Z: I think at last tally, we'd doubled it.

John: "That's the US way!"

Chris Z: "Give it 110%!"

Vonny: "And it's a price we're willing to pay!"

John: "For democracy!"

Vonny: Because you know, we all decided that that was a price we're willing to pay. But lemme tell you about New York. We spent all day in bars, listening to stories and drinking all day, and some guy in the bar we were at worked for the clean-up crews, and he was saying there were just truckloads of body parts going out every day. Hands, arms, legs — crazy shit.

Chris Z: What was your own reaction?

Brian: We were en route to Richmond, just in the van all day and it was surreal.

John: It was all radio. And I was scared shitless. I just knew that within a very short time, that everything would change. And it has. And it sucks.

Chris Z: But I think it's been in ways that people didn't expect.

John: I don't think it's unexpected at all. I had a feeling that was pretty much how it was going to happen: they're gonna curtail the shit out of civil liberties, they're gonna consolidate power into the executive branch.

Chris Z: The shadow government?

John: They've had that for decades, but now they're just more out about it. People are more comfortable with the idea. They're just using it as an excuse to make people more comfortable with this totalitarian presence.

Chris Z: How's it affected you as a band?

John: Not so much yet.

Vonny: It's such an underground network —

it's not like we take planes anywhere.

Matt: I don't think they're really worried about us doing what we're doing.

John: But we are on the most FBI-monitored independent record label around.

Chris Z: Seriously?

John: Alternative Tentacles has gotten sued by the government two or three times. (The Dead Kennedy's album) *Frankenchrist* and also the Crucifucks. So there might be a point where "they" have a problem with something we say. Who knows? We'll be joining the axis of evil, baby! It's more likely than if we were still on SPAM (Records), though it's pretty fucking unlikely.

Chris Z: What do you think about the idea of "Reagan Syndrome?" The idea that bad government makes for good music? And how does Sept. 11 factor in?

John: Well, it is kind of good for music — there's a lot of good bands around!

Matt: But the labels — as far as major labels and all that fucking bullshit — are going to be afraid, and they're not going to put anything good out there now. It's gonna be even worse than normal because of the amount of government control over the media, what's poisoning people's minds and shit.

Chris Z: It seems like a subtle pressure. Now, it's not exactly cool to start talking shit about the WTC or anything.

John: Well, rock'n'roll is so reactionary anyway, just by nature, that when all this action's going on that's really firm and solid in one direction, there's gonna obviously be an equal and opposite reaction. And rock'n'roll is one of its many manifestations. It doesn't really change much, but it's a reflection. And, of course, music is going to reflect a fucking viewpoint that's not the same as the people in charge.

Brian: Underground music might become more relevant — there's a large percentage of people who don't agree with the government right now, and that music's not gonna

I don't party anymore. I just sit in my room and twitch.



be heard on the radio.

Chris Z: Do you think people will rise to the occasion and dissent? Or are people just gonna be too afraid to be threatening?

Matt: I think the underground scene will be pushed further underground. But I also think the cops are too busy looking for fucking terrorists. We're saying what we believe outright — we're not as dangerous as the people who are conspiring and doing shit.

John: The problem is that it'll come down to the same shit it always does, which is that the fucking opposition and the Left, or whatever you wanna call it, will fragment, and the other side will continue to be this big nasty juggernaut that it is, and there will be a lot of fomentation, but no one will have enough common ground to really be able to do much, unfortunately. But at least it'll be present — there will be flashpoints. I mean, reactionaries rule the world! They rule the country right now.

Vonny: They rule my ass.

John: They rule Von's ass. I was gonna babble something about Foucault, but I'm gonna leave that out.

Chris Z: Yeah, this interview might be getting too polysyllabic.

John: We gotta keep our moronic image.

Chris Z: "Rock. Rock on."

John: "No Foucault. Just R-A-W-K."

Vonny: "What's your guys favorite kind of beer?"

Matt: "I poured some beer into a condom the other day and sucked it out like a baby bottle!"

Chris Z: Unlubricated, right?

Matt: "Nah, I like that powder in the beer, ya know?"

Chris Z: Fleshies are a political band like (you-fill-in-the-blank) is a (you-fill-in-the-blank) band. Why?

John: Fleshies are a political band like

Gene Krupa was a grand master of blast beats.

Chris Z: So how did you end up with an album on Alternative Tentacles?

John: Jello just saw us. He wasn't really that into it at first — he told Phantom Limbs they could do a record whenever they wanted. And he thought about us for a while, and saw us again, and that was it.

Vonny: We went and had dinner — it was like a fairy tale!

Pixie Stix and Shasta Cola - you mix that up and that is the gateway drug

Matt: We kept bringing up shit that we didn't know we weren't supposed to bring up. Like John kept talking about the Feederz, and Jello just kind of starts twitching, like, "You know the story, don't you?"

Chris Z: Didn't they rip him off?

Matt: The singer ran off with his wife! And cleared his bank account! And we're like, "Oh, fuck!"

John: I'm like, "When are you gonna put out that Feederz reissue? I fucking love that band! That's one of my favorite bands ever!"

Vonny: I didn't even know any of this stuff.

John: Yeah, we were totally clueless. "Hey, we're from the suburbs, man!"

Chris Z: So, none of you are from the East Bay?

John: We're all from trashy suburbs. Not like the nice suburbs. Well, maybe Benicia — but Benicia's entire backyard is a refinery. Where I'm from is kind of defined by the fact that there are giant refineries a few miles away that could spew out a toxic cloud of sulfuric acid at any point. And kill half the population.

Chris Z: But oddly enough, you don't smoke, right?

John: Not anymore.

Chris Z: Because you're getting the carcinogens for free?

John: In those areas, you just say "Fuck it" after a while. I lived there for a few years even after high school, and in those areas, it's just kind of hopeless. There's not a lot going on. And it's produced a lot of crazy culture, crazy music — but nobody ever really acknowledges it because they relocate out here [to the East Bay] and do their thing.

Chris Z: Hence SPAM Records? (A label with close ties to Fleshies and the suburbs.)

John: Which still maintains the El Sobrante PO Box!

Matt: It's definitely the real shit. And SPAM shows are always the most fun, the most fucked up and usually the most illegal ever.

Chris Z: So, what's really going on in the East Bay right now? What's exciting now?

John: There's a bunch of Marines standing on the bridge and I heard they're staying at the Marriot.

Chris Z: We're going over there then, right?

Matt: Marines know how to party, man. We were in Little Rock and they started getting all homo-erotic on each other.

John: Oh God! There were these two huge Marines and there were all these high school bands that played, and they were getting their funk metal on.

Brian: This is in a gazebo in the middle of a park, by the way.

John: And by the time we were playing, there was maybe fifteen people left, and the Marines were two of the people who stuck around the whole time, and they'd been super-violent the whole time. And then we played and they went from being super-violent to super-super-homo. It was amazing. I had my shirt off and my underwear said "NO GENDER" on it, and they were like grabbing on my nipples and rubbing my nipples, and then some guy grabbed the mic and threw me up on his shoulders and was like, "This guy's getting his feet dirty walking all over your faces!"

Brian: And John was yelling things like, "Transgenderism!" And they're all like, "Yeah! Yay for unspecific gender!"

John: I felt like we won for a minute!

Chris Z: That underwear: is it grey by design or just well-used?

John: It's just underwear I've been wearing for a while. You roll around on enough floors and no matter what you're wearing, it'll eventually look grey. I wash it, but it doesn't matter.

Matt: I don't know how many times I've heard him say, "Where's my pants?" after a show. "Where's my shoe? I can't find my sock."

John: Aw, enough of nakedness.

Chris Z: What? There can never be enough nakedness.

Matt: Uh, actually, yeah, there can be.



Chris Z: What's the limit?

Matt: The limit is if we're not playing around our friends or we're not playing a totally dead show that's really boring with four people.

John: I take my clothes off when I'm uncomfortable.

Chris Z: I'd love to see you at a job interview.

John: I just figure I'll take it to the next level and make everyone else uncomfortable, as well.

Matt: If we're really sucking, like my amp breaks or whatever, having a bad night, then that's a good time.

Vonny: John'll do it also when there's like a really violent crowd — he'll go rub his nuts on these very testosterone-y guys and they'll back up.

John: Tongue-kissing helps, too.

Vonny: He sat down in a skinhead's lap in Minneapolis.

Matt: Molested his braces. Adjusted his suspenders.

Vonny: Gave him a lap dance in the middle of a show.

Chris Z: Are macho dudes into that? That's an interesting way to defuse a situation.

John: Well, I've never gotten hit.

Vonny: I got hit with a beer bottle, but that was just my friends. I got a scar.

Matt: As far as the naked thing, it usually means the show's sucking, if there's nudity.

John: It's a good barometer for it.

Matt: Yeah, we have to get naked to offset the fact that we suck.

Chris Z: Overcompensation?

John: Total overcompensation. To distract from the terrible, terrible rock.

Vonny: It's like dazzle camouflage.

Chris Z: Did you get naked when you played during the Sundance Film Fest on tour?

Vonny: I don't think I've ever gotten naked at one of our shows.

John: Yeah, you did. Libertatia. We all did. And so did three-quarters of the audiences. That must have been scary.

Matt: There was a big dust storm, too, so you'd see all this dust and then all of a sudden, a pecker would stick out and then go back into the big cloud of dust.

Chris Z: That's uncomfortably vivid. So tell me about Sundance. Like the girl who claimed she was Ozzy Osbourne's daughter.

John: And Brian in the street yelling at everybody, asking if they wanted to be on *Baywatch*. Tell the story of what you were doing.

Brian: Um, I don't remember what I was doing. It was funny — the whole city was really nice and clean and cheesy, like you'd imagine, and we were ten drunk dirty people outside, stopping cars...

John: Get in front of cars, just start gyrating...

Brian: I almost licked a man's asshole! And our friend wrote "FUCK BUSH" all over this guy's house! And someone took a shit in the hot tub!

John: That was the girl who was pretending

to be Ozzy Osbourne's daughter. She took a shit in the hot tub.

Matt: I think she's lying — nobody SAW the shit.

John: There were a lot of aspiring models-slash-actresses.

Chris Z: Make any connections?

Matt: I fell asleep on the couch. That place sucked.

Chris Z: What are the things you need for a Fleshies-approved party?

Matt: Prince.

Brian: Naked hot-tubbing.

Matt: No, that ain't even necessary.

John: Prince, coke dealers in full-body camouflage...

Matt: I'd say Prince records are the ultimate party requirement.

John: I don't party anymore. I just sit in my room and twitch.

Matt: It's whatever you're doing with your people, whatever makes it interesting. Like this is a party, right now!

John: I hate parties. I'm old.

Matt: We had a siz-yrup party at Vonnie's place. I made 50/50 (Vicks) 44 (cough syrup) and Vodka and flavored it with a little concentrate and we took shots of it out of the little cup that comes with the 44. And we did a bunch. And at the beginning, everyone's like, "Yeah Yeah! Have some Robo! This is gonna be great!" And then by the end of the night, everyone is just quiet, staring at each other. It killed the whole party.

Chris Z: It's not a party drug.

John: Well, you got 3-6 Mafia. They're so good. "Sippin' the siz-yrup."

Chris Z: If there's kids out there that wanna get into abusing drugs, where's a good place to start?

John: Huffing.

Brian: Whip-its.

Vonny: Rubber cement.

Matt: It all starts in third grade, telling people what they can and cannot do. Honestly, people are trying to be fucking parents, and trying to get everyone else to be fucking parents, and it's fucked.

John: It all starts with Pixie Stix.

Chris Z: Did you ever put Pixie Stix up your nose?

Matt: Fuck yeah! It hurts!

John: Pixie Stix and Shasta Cola — you mix that up and that is the gateway drug.

Vonny: I snorted some Saltines once. Like a year ago.

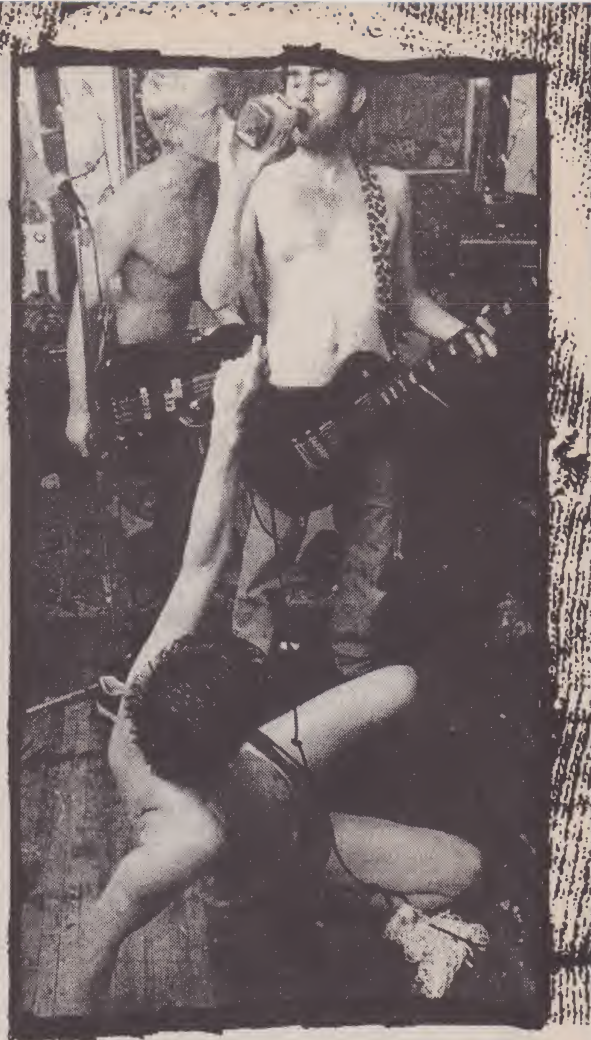
Matt: Coke and Pop Rocks! And you can hear your stomach popping — that's like the best sound ever.

Chris Z: Do you think rock'n'roll has finally killed emo?

John: Tribe 8 and Turbonegro killed emo.

Chris Z: What's the most you ever helped the revolution in one twenty-four hour period?

John: I didn't brush my teeth for six days once. Fuck flouride!



Chris Z: Is human history a downhill spiral into darkness, a relatively stable cycle of suffering and salvation, or a painful groping toward utopia? And where do Fleshies fit in to this?

John: All I know is that there isn't going to be any Christian Apocalypse anytime soon, no matter how much they try to bring it on, and even if half the world blows up, I still have a 50% chance of waking up in the morning next to somebody I barely know, and then I'll painfully grope towards my own personal utopia all I want. But that's really none of y'all's business.

Chris Z: Seriously, what is the role of an artist in society?

John: To help destabilize it bit by bit, and hopefully contribute to its complete ruination. Then the artists can try to make their own society, which'll barely work since they're a bunch of goddamn flaky nutjobs. Inevitably, some asshole will burn down the barn and wreck the whole experiment — i.e. the fate of just about every 19th century utopian communal town. I highly recommend Sidney Lens' classic *History of Radicalism in America* for several shining examples.

Chris Z: And finally: fuck, art, or rock? Which one and why?

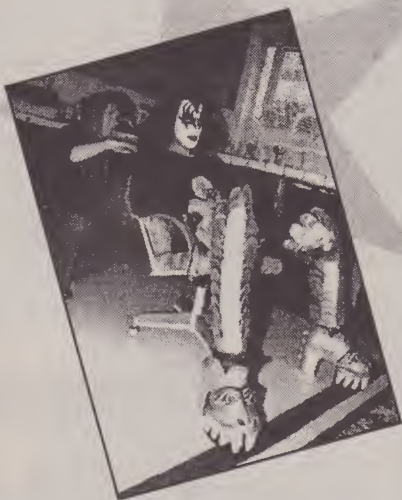
John: Fuck for rock and rock out, you artfuck.

Brian: We're done!



RAZORCAKE 51

TRIBUTE BANDS TRIBUTE BANDS TRIBUTE BANDS



BY LIZ Q.
BY LIZ Q.
BY LIZ Q.

It's Friday night in the San Fernando Valley and, despite the fact that most of this suburban collective has shut down by 10:00 P.M., Paladino's is alive. Located in the corner of a mini-mall on Reseda Boulevard in Tarzana, California, Paladino's is a dive of a bar with the prerequisite dark wood decor, tattered pool tables, and heavy metal blaring through the speakers, yet it is typically packed beyond capacity. Harley Davidsons and pickup trucks cram together in the parking lot leaving little room to walk up to the club. Longhaired guys in flannel shirts pick up on girls who look as if they have taken all of their fashion cues from Kelly Bundy. It is, perhaps, the least trendy crowd you will find within the city limits of Los Angeles. There are no haute couture mullets. No intentionally tattered Bob Seger t-shirts purchased at Fred Segal for a few hundred dollars in sight. Instead, the scene at Paladino's consists of a few hundred hessians still mourning the loss of *Headbanger's Ball* and waiting to catch a glimpse of the Iron Maidens.

After a performance by the all-female AC/DC tribute, Whole Lotta Rosies, the five leather-clad women who make up the Iron Maidens take the stage and begin their aural assault on the crowd. The crowd screams and bangs heads as if a case of whiplash is a spoil of war. The band rages through a repertoire culled primarily from the Bruce Dickinson-era of Iron Maiden as singer Jenny "Bruce Chickinson" Warren nails her impersonation of the legendary Maiden frontman complete with the howling command "Scream for me, Paladino's" (Dickinson's catchphrase, his website is www.scream-forme.com). Cameo appearances are made by the Devil from the "Number of the Beast" video, Iron Maiden mascot, Eddie, and the "naughty daughter brought to the slaughter" as the crowd waves devil horns and screams song titles. The Iron Maidens have proved that they can bring an arena-caliber performance to suburban bars that hold, at best, three hundred people. Like thousands of other bands worldwide, these five women have carved a niche in the competitive music world by playing someone else's music.

RAZORCAKE 52

Unlike cover bands, who perform a wide range of

material at weddings, bar mitzvahs and local watering holes, tribute artists become their rock heroes. Like an Elvis impersonator, they study the band's costumes and stage persona. They mimic studio and live recordings note for note and bring elements of videos and live performances to their own stage show. As is the case with impersonators of the King, tribute bands are often lambasted by critics and music aficionados or, on occasion, given the hipster-style backhanded compliment "it's so bad it's good."

"In a sense, what we are doing is cheesy," Warren says. "We're basically schlocking out songs that someone else wrote and making a big theatrical production out of it, drawing large crowds and being paid for it when there are talented local original metal bands out there like Prototype, Teabag, Artisan, Uprooted, Project1, and more, that are creating phenomenal work and are having to drudge through the ticket-selling process, dealing with smaller crowds, not being paid, dealing with unscrupulous promoters and sometimes getting little appreciation or response from the crowd for all their talent and hard work."

While tribute bands may not always be taken seriously by the music press, this movement cannot simply be brushed aside as a passing trend. No one can deny the fact that there has been, and will continue to be, a demand for tribute artists. In the words of Jose Maldonado, lead singer of Smiths/Morrissey tribute The Sweet and Tender Hooligans, "If there was no demand for it, we wouldn't be out there.... There's an interest out there. There is a demand, we supply it."

Consider the continuously staggering sales of releases from the rock legends of yore. SoundScan, which tracks the national sales of albums, reports that since the company's inception in 1992, Van Halen's catalogue has sold over 15.5 million units. The Smiths and Iron Maiden, who received considerably less support from commercial radio and MTV at their peak, have sold over four million units a piece over the course of the past ten years. Interest in these bands has never faded, with new fans emerging on an almost daily basis. With

that in mind, it is easy to understand why tribute bands mean big business for promoters who have realized that the designer imposter version of a rock supergroup leads to standing-room-only events at venues that may not be able to draw anything more than a few locals on other nights. Meanwhile, the bands serve as a creative outlet for talented musicians who may struggle with a career based on original songs. Most importantly, tributes are the closest fans may ever get to attending a show by their favorite bands.

According to Lenny Mann, guitarist for Led-Zepagain and founder of www.tributecity.com, the premier website documenting this musical subculture, there are two sorts of tribute artists. "There are tributes for artists who are currently popular on the charts. There are Britney Spears tributes, Shania Twain, that sort of thing. That appeals to one section of the population where it's a matter of cost. Maybe, if they are lucky, that artist will come into their city and do a concert and they'll have to shell out \$30.00 or \$40.00 for tickets. Whereas, if someone nails it, they can see it at a local venue and pay maybe a quarter of that price to see that sort of an act. On the other side of the coin, for example with our Led Zeppelin tribute, people will never get to see Led Zeppelin. They will never get to experience what a Led Zeppelin concert was. So, we're appealing maybe to the baby boomer generation who maybe saw the band and wanted to recreate the moment. That's priceless, something they could never hope to see unless a tribute band was doing it."

Reagan Boyce is a twenty-five-year-old resident of Los Angeles

When thinking of tribute, one envisions a group who look, sound, and act like a particular band. The same could be said for Los Angeles-based tribute, the Iron Maidens, except for one thing — this band is fueled by estrogen.

Jenny "Bruce Chickenson" Warren initially formed an Iron Maiden tribute with Melanie "Steve Heiress" Sisneros and three male members. Under the name Wrathchild, Warren and company played across the city with relative success. Soon, the male members of the band were replaced by Sarah "Mini Murry" Marsh, Linda "Nikki McBURRain" McDonald and Josephine "Adrienne Smith" Tarus and the name was changed to the Iron Maidens.

"Our first show had been hyped for so long that when we finally did play it, the audience mostly consisted of rabid Maiden sex-starved lunatics, skeptics and friends," Warren recalls.

In the band's early days, Warren went by the double nickname Bruce Chickenson/Paulina Di'Anno, as a reference to both Iron Maiden singers. She dropped the latter explaining, "We only do four Di'Anno-era tunes right now and my voice is much closer match to Bruce Dickinson's vibrato

and diehard fan of Van Halen tribute, the Atomic Punks. "I first saw the Atomic Punks two years ago at Scruffy O'Shea's in Marina del Rey [now defunct] and I thought that they were unbelievably real. I never had the chance to see Van Halen, let alone David Lee Roth's Van Halen, live, so this was the next best thing. I make a point to go see them whenever they are playing in Los Angeles."

"The thing about the Atomic Punks is that they are not only really good, really talented, but they play great music from an era and

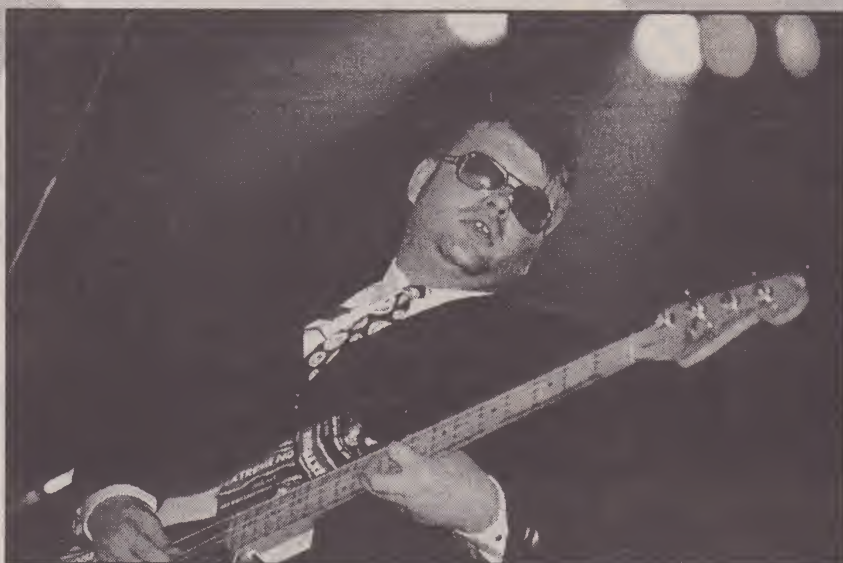
genre of music that is hard to find on a regular basis these days. I admit that I love '80s metal and rock 'n' roll and always will. For all of the bands that I missed seeing in their heyday, to see a really good tribute band play is almost as good. Sometimes it's even better because you get the experience and get to hear your favorite songs live, but, at the same time, you get the small venue feel, which is way better than a huge arena any day."

While tribute bands are commonly associated with hard rock and heavy metal,

alternative music fans have not been neglected. Of the 666 bands listed on tributecity.com, a number of acts offer tributes to modern rock icons such as the Cure and Depeche Mode. In Los Angeles, perhaps one

of the most popular local acts is the Sweet and Tender Hooligans, who have managed to build a solid international following playing the songs of the Smiths and Morrissey.

Formed in 1992 as an original music band with a Smiths-inspired name and a singer whose looks and mannerisms make him the brown-eyed Morrissey, Sweet and Tender Hooligans gradually



(ABOVE) PATRICK COSTELLO, A POPULAR MINNEAPOLIS-BASED ELVIS IMPERSONATOR

THE IRON MAIDENS

and placement. I keep his persona and costume concept in mind. Besides, Dickinson was a huge influence on my vocal style. I got into the Di'Anno-era material after I had exhausted my eardrums with albums like *Piece of Mind* and *Powerslave*."

Warren is very matter-of-fact when discussing the preconceived notions that Maiden fans might have when realizing that a girl will be filling the shoes of Bruce Dickinson.

"I ask people who have never seen us after the show, 'Honestly, what was your expectation of our show?' Usually, they say, 'I thought it was going to suck but you guys blew me away.'"

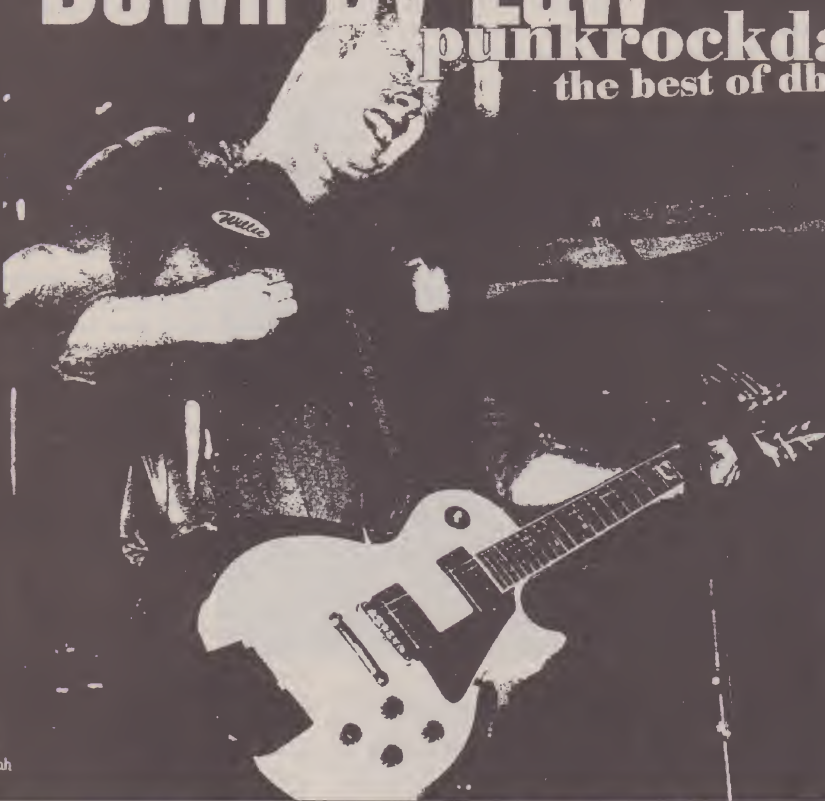
Even though Iron Maidens have a knack for converting Doubting Thomases, there is always the person who will hold gender against the band. "I've had people tell me, 'You aren't a real tribute band because you are women.' I think that's hilarious because we sound, dress and move like the characters we portray, we just feminize them a bit." However, Warren is quick to point out, "Being female helps our appeal, that's for

sure. I think it's kind of funny. We get guys who just get off on women dressed in leather playing metal and then we get skeptics who cross their arms and snicker to their friends during the first song and a half, but even those guys stay until the end and are rocking out until our last song."

While the Iron Maidens still have hurdles ahead of them, including trying to convince "out-of-it booking agents that Iron Maiden has a large, loyal following who will come out not only to see Maiden played accurately note for note, but to see it done by women," they are successfully making their way through the boy-dominated world of the heavy metal tribute. "Now that the word is out, people rock out and the crowds are bigger and a little calmer. Don't get me wrong, they still get into the shows, we've just had less freaks jumping on stage and pulling their pants down and making lewd gestures. Now the people that come to our shows are so into Maiden, any behavior or rude comment would almost be considered disrespectful to the real Iron Maiden. We're there paying our homage and respect to Iron Maiden and their fans are there paying respect to us. Maiden fans are really very loyal. It's a nice vibe."

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began to explore life as tribute artists. "There was a Morrissey/Smiths convention that was held annually," Maldonado explains. "The very first one in LA was held in 1992. I thought we should see if they'll let us play and we could play a whole set of Morrissey/Smiths songs. So, that became an annual thing. We continued to do our original music year-round but, once a year for the convention, we would do only a Morrissey and Smiths set. As time wore on, we started to drop the idea of having an original band. The tribute thing became more frequent, more common than doing original music."

Over the past decade, Sweet and Tender Hooligans gigs have evolved into an event strikingly similar to an actual Morrissey concert. In fact, their recreation of the Smiths/Morrissey live performance is so accurate that the famed singer recently walked onstage before a show in Arizona and greeted the audience with, "Hello, we're the Sweet and Tender Hooligans." Given the fact that Maldonado is a more-than-reasonable facsimile of Morrissey, it's no wonder that fans engage in traditional Moz-antics, such as climbing onstage and throwing flowers at the singer.

"I sort of look at it as the way that I'm doing an impersonation of Morrissey. I think that the kids are doing an impersonation of what they are like when they go to see a Morrissey show. I, by no means, take myself so seriously that I think that I have so much power over them. There have been people running onto the stage to hug me and try to rip my shirt off, just like they do to Morrissey. They're just getting into the show. I want to encourage people to bring gladiolas and to revisit what a Smiths show was like or what a Morrissey show is like."

Maldonado points out that, like most tribute bands, the sole purpose of Sweet and Tender Hooligans is to keep the spirit of their favorite band alive. "We do it for the sheer reason of only the love of Morrissey and his songs and the fact that people ask us to do it. If people didn't ask us to do it, we would still do it, but we would be in our garage playing for a few friends over a twelve pack of beer. But, it's by no means a source of income."

"One could look at what we do for Morrissey. Do we keep his music alive? Do we keep the live experience alive? I tend to think that the answer is yes. I've made a few Morrissey fans out of having this band together, performing this music live. I can't tell you how many people said, 'I only like Morrissey's stuff with the Smiths,' and once they heard us, they got into his solo material even more so than they already were with the Smiths. If I can do that, I'm the happiest person alive. He's got so much to say. He has such beautiful, beautiful songs that inspire me in so many ways. [This band has] given me the opportunity to spread that around."

As Morrissey evangelists, Sweet and Tender Hooligans recently toured the U.K. and finally had the chance to perform in their heroes' hometown. "It's like you're a Van Halen tribute band you're playing Pasadena. It was very important to know that [Manchester] was okay with us. They were a tough audience, but certainly one of the best. By the time we did 'Bigmouth Strikes Again' there were probably more people onstage — people had jumped onstage to dance around the band — then there were people on the floor. I could feel it buckle a little bit."

With the fanfare surrounding quality tributes, one must wonder what the original bands think?

Maldonado has met Morrissey on four different occasions in addition to meeting all of the members of the Smiths and Moz's current band. "The very last time I met him, he told me that he has a VHS copy of one of our shows and he liked it. He said that I did a fantastic job and should release 'Lost' as a single, which I did not take seriously. I told him, 'That's not our job, that's your job. I do what I do because I love your songs. Thank you for your beautiful songs.'

I think what that particular meeting said is that he was okay with it. One thing I did get out of that conversation was that he found it rather amusing that he has an impersonator. When he thinks of people who have impersonators, he thinks of Elvis or Madonna or Cher or Neil Diamond. These kind of iconic people have impersonators. So he finds it rather amusing that he is one of these people that inspires an impersonator — someone who would style his hair like him and dress like him onstage for the show, sing like him. I gather that he was quite pleased with that."

While Morrissey acknowledges the existence of the Sweet and Tender Hooligans, David Lee Roth wrote in his book *Crazy From the Heart* that the Atomic Punks are "the best Van Halen tribute band ever." A former member of the LA Guns, Ralph Saenz, formed the Atomic Punks during the mid-'90s. "Metal was being smashed by grunge," he explains. "The clubs started dying off, musicians moved to Seattle. After our first show, clubs wanted to book the band. It was as if we became the release for people. Metal was dying but Van

Halen's music would live forever. The people responded wherever we played. Even if you are not a Van Halen fan, you will become one after hearing Van Halen's music. It happens all the time." While Eddie Van Halen used to check out the Atomic Punks play at the legendary San Fernando Valley rock club, F.M. Station, David Lee Roth and Michael Anthony watched the Punks show in their hometown of Pasadena, California. Roth is alleged to have remarked "Good thing I got maternity insurance," after meeting Saenz, who also performed "California Girls" in the movie *Rockstar*, at the Sunset Strip's heavy metal club, the Rainbow Room. Anthony actually performed with the band at a Valley strip club. "We were so nervous that we played everything really fast," Saenz recalls. "The crowd lost it. Michael said he felt like he went back in time."

Of course, out of the thousands of tribute bands in existence, only a few are able to win fans and impress icons with their performances. Just as in the world of original music groups, many tribute bands remain obscure, playing in ghost town venues to inanimate crowds. Charles Livingston, a writer based in South Carolina, learned this lesson with his own tribute to U2.

After witnessing a performance by Beatles tribute, 1964, at a barbecue competition in Phoenix, Arizona, Livingston caught tribute fever.

"This was the first live gig I had seen in years that was actually fun. You know, you go see live bands all the time trying to make it, but most of them just aren't very good or entertaining. My own all-originals band was in the long, slow process of falling apart at the time, so I filed the idea away in case the band didn't pull through. As it happens, the band broke up about six months later and I had already been putting together some demos of U2 material myself, so as soon as the old band called it quits, I went straight to work on the U2 tribute."

Aside from being his favorite band, U2 appeared to be an untapped source of tribute material, particularly in the southeastern United States "where dinosaur Southern boogie-rock is still king and few people outside of big metropolitan areas like U2." Calling his band Rattle and Hum, Livingston's homage to U2 began in 1998. Livingston describes problems that occurred even in these early days. "The Southeast is a terrible place to find audiences and musicians interest in U2. There is still this ingrained idea here of the worship of the instrumentalist with most musicians and audiences feeling that if the band doesn't have at least one hotshot solo player, it's not exciting or worth listening to. This particularly poses a problem with finding an Adam Clayton, because there is a perception out there that he is a lousy bass player. With all of the Flea disciples out there and whatnot, it is very hard to convince bass players to



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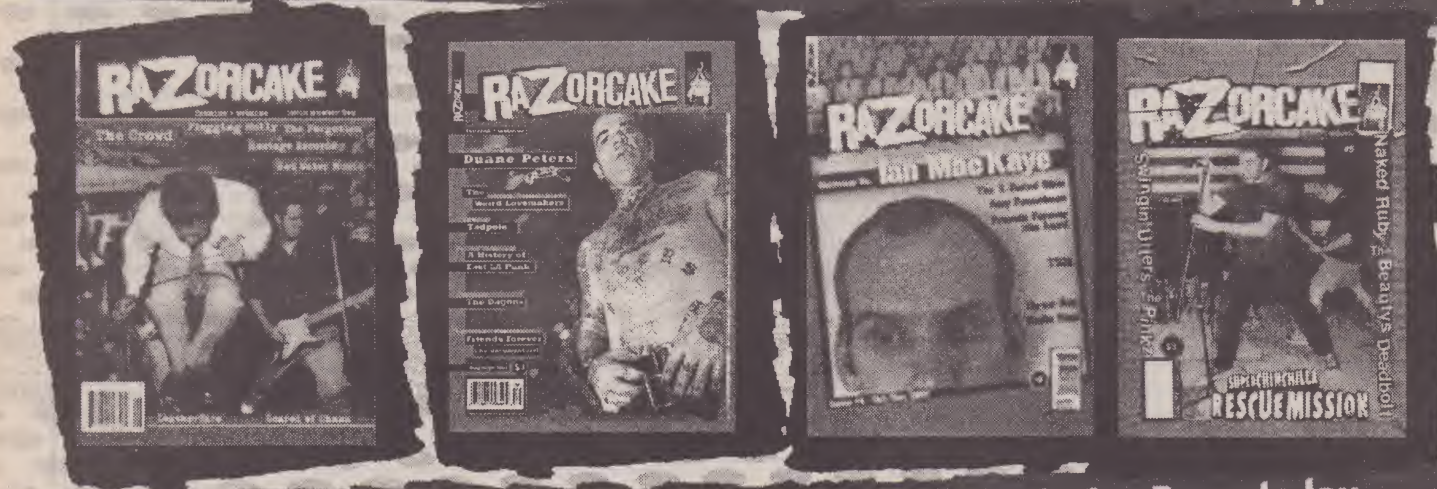


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stick with Adam's simpler bass lines. We went through three bass players because of this." After several lineup alterations, they changed the name to U2 Zoo.

While all of the members of the final lineup for U2 Zoo were zealous fans of the Irish supergroup, sometimes the line between the musician and their onstage persona became blurred.

"I made the mistake of giving the Bono position to a guy who looked frighteningly similar to Bono — same facial features, body build and same quirky, off-kilter personality. That ended up being a big problem. He considered himself to be an 'artist' and was constantly pushing way from mimicking a performance and trying to move the band towards originals.

"He also didn't take care of his voice and flat-out refused to seek vocal coaching so that he could learn some techniques to preserve his voice. It was really a heartbreaker — his vocal tone was very similar to Bono's, but over the course of two years, he wiped his voice out completely."

"Bono's" vocal shortcomings proved to be the breaking point for U2 Zoo's performances. "In the beginning, I think audiences were kind of intrigued by the similarity in his looks to Bono, but once peo-

ple realized that he could not sing very well, we started having a hard time getting gigs. That's not my opinion — we had talent buyers tell us specifically that the reason they were turning us down was that the singer was weak. If you are not tight and very pro, you will lose the audience sooner or later. That certainly happened to us many times. The proof was that we stopped getting gigs because the word had got out that we weren't very good."

While Livingston has since left the realm of the tribute band, it seems as if more musicians have made public emulation a way of life. Jose Maldonado made a passing reference to an inscription on the vinyl 12" for the Smiths' hit "Bigmouth Strikes Again" when he said, "talent borrows, genius steals."

"Don't all rock bands borrow from their influences? If you strip everything down to what got people into [rock] music in the first place, it begins with either Elvis or the Beatles. Even if they didn't listen to those bands, someone down the line was listening to the Rolling Stones or the Beach Boys or Elvis Presley or the Beatles. Everyone borrows from what it was that inspired them to make music in the first place." Perhaps all a tribute band is doing is taking the obvious to an extreme.



AND NOW... A FEATURE PRESENTATION

"I discovered the world of tribute bands as a fan. A Queen fan. So when I heard there was a Queen tribute band, I had to check it out."

Rich Fox was "blown away" by Sheer Heart Attack's recreation of a Queen concert. "On the one hand, it was hilarious and campy and I couldn't stop laughing. On the other hand, I really enjoyed it on an emotional level. I'd never seen Queen perform. This was as close as I was going to get."

Friend Kris Curry notes that Rich became "addicted" to Sheer Heart Attack's performances. What began as an infatuation with tribute band culture culminated in the duo's first film, which is currently making the rounds on the festival circuit and plans to make its international debut this summer with premiers in Scotland and Australia. *Tribute*, a documentary directed by Fox and Curry, with Steven Soderbergh serving as executive producer, chronicles the lives of five bands dedicated to the art of the homage.

"The more Kris and I talked about tribute bands and saw tribute bands, the more we discovered it to be really fascinating. We wanted to know why these talented musicians spend so much time on other people's music. Was it that they wanted to be the person they were imitating? We wondered why the fans treated them like the real thing. And, personally, I wondered why I was so into it."

Curry adds that, "One thing led to another and when we ended up spending our New Year's Eve at a 'tribute-a-palooza' show, we knew that a documentary was inevitable."

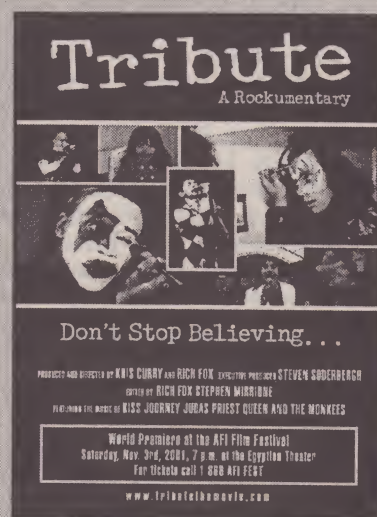
"As we started filming," Fox explains, "we found we related to the topic on many personal levels. This wasn't just about tribute bands. This was about fame, failure and trying to achieve your dreams against the odds. This was about obsession and getting older. These were the ideas that drove us to spend five years on this film."

While *Tribute* was never intended to represent the tribute scene as a whole, Fox and Curry did select an eclectic array of

bands. *Tribute* follows Sheer Heart Attack as they take on Los Angeles and ultimately lose their singer to the German theatre; documents KISS tribute Larger than Life from their humble beginnings through their singer's nervous breakdown; delves into the lives of Escape (Journey tribute) and Bloodstone (Judas Priest tribute); and showcases feuding Monkees wannabes, the Missing Links. Curry explains that, "bands with a big visual were important (KISS), since it is film, and we were also attracted to acts that had an irony quotient (Journey, The Monkees). At least that's what we thought at first. It soon became clear that a few bands have interesting ongoing stories in their lives and you have to run with them. I mean, when the Gene Simmons in your Kiss tribute starts to go insane, you know you have to go with that story!"

Perhaps more interesting than the bands are the fans. Says Curry, "We did indeed run into a lot of fans who were deeply passionate about their tribute bands, men and women alike — people who never miss a show, whose social life revolves around a given band." Most notable is Sheer Heart Attack devotee Mark (a.k.a. Superfan), who treats show dates as if they are Holy Days of Obligation, complete with preparation rituals and ecstatic behavior in front of the stage.

"There is no question that tribute bands are an outlet for deep musical obsession. Fans often become attached to the tribute band, almost as if it is the original band. In a lot of cases, the original band is gone, so the tribute band is the only outlet for their obsession. As a Queen fan, I can relate to this. Also, the fans can get to know the tribute band personally, something they can't do with big rock stars. For Superfan, Queen and the tribute band take on a religious significance in his life. It's what gives him comfort and gets him through the day. We did meet some others like Superfan, but Superfan is also one-of-a-kind. Most people think someone that obsessed with music would stand out as weird, but here's a normal, and very nice, sweet and intelligent guy who has that



much obsession."

Fox states that after five years he "learned that most of the bands are normal guys who have pretty good reasons for doing what they do. We were surprised to find out how much we related to musicians in tribute bands and how similar our lives were to theirs. We all had big dreams and were forced to compromise those dreams as we got older. Most tribute musicians didn't seek out to be in tribute bands, but they're making the best of it since it might be their last option as a musician."

Curry agrees adding that he "was impressed with the degree of musicianship a lot of these tributes showed. I mean, to play Eddie Van Halen's licks note for note — and that's what is required in a Van Halen tribute — you have to be able to play Eddie Van Halen's licks note for note. Plus, a lot of these guys who play in tributes play in more than one, so that they play Van Halen note for note and Boston note for note and Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin, too. That's a pretty big repertoire. I always wondered why some of these guys weren't established studio musicians — some accident of fate, maybe? Certainly not a lack of talent."

Strike Anywhere

In Defiance of Empty Times

Interview with Thomas and Matt Sherwood
by Retodd

Photos by Kat Jetson (unless noted)

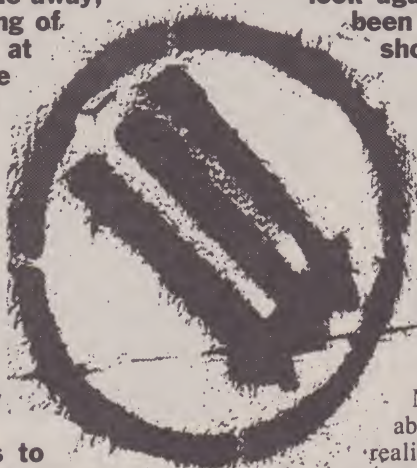
When I really think about punk rock and what it truly means at its core, it quickly gets pared down to this: this music keeps me alive and living a life I want. It's naked. It can't have a uniform. It's my pep talk. My meditation. My close family. Partly, my rage. The fact that others - with much larger media megaphones and fancier pants - have acquisitioned parts of it doesn't bother me that much. Perhaps, in the seventeen years I've been involved with it, I've developed an instinct. I can smell shit a mile away, no matter the dress code or the raping of its most obvious rituals. To be sure, at times, it's tough to see through the gauze of advertising that would have worked on me even a year ago. Our own clever weapons - even our very own words - have been used repeatedly against us to sell to punk's skin and appearance over and over again. Two things usually happen. We either get smarter with each turn and learn from our mistakes or we give up, give in, and tie our own hands behind our backs because we're already so very fucked.

All's very far from lost. It helps to think in these terms. If there wasn't something real and vital - an earnest intimacy - punk would dissipate completely. It's not all false manufacture. If it were, we'd all be talking in the past tense, purely as historians, picking at the parts with sterilized tweezers. That's far from the case.

Strike Anywhere is the compression and ignition of a long tradition of hard, melodic bands. Start with the terrace-raising sounds of early Cocksparrer and Blitz. Add to it the simple, swelling compassion of Avail and the kinetic explosiveness of Kid Dynamite's ability to make an active yet kindly pit. Lead it with clear, acerbic, and thoughtful political lyrics. Steep it in over a century of

Southern heritage. Instead of a photocopied miasma that zings off in too many directions, their sound is amazingly clear and directed, sieved and distilled into something that that can be simultaneously as hard as straight shots of bourbon and as easy to gulp down as sweet tea. It's been a long time since I've heard a band sound so contemporary and so traditional at the same time.

If you think punk's been long dead and buried, look again. The coffin's been resurrected and been built into another stage for a basement show when you weren't paying attention.



Todd: Strike Anywhere, the name, does it mean you'll ready to ignite at any time or that you'll encourage people to exercise their right to fair treatment?

Thomas: Probably the latter, more like joyously inhabiting a parallel media to the actions of folks and putting our voices in everywhere that we can.

Todd: Matt, what's the minimal accepted amount of flair on a Strike Anywhere guitar strap?

Matt: One piece of flair is the minimum acceptable amount. I have shown more in the past and I realize the folly of my ways. I mean, I felt excited about it at the time but the photographic evidence shows it wasn't the way to go.

Todd: What were your pieces of flair?

Matt: I had a pin that said something along the lines of "Chess Makes You Smart," I had an old Boy Scout, a Batman pin, some comics book stuff, a Mork from Ork pin - that was some real shit - and bunch of pins from bands we play with that I like a lot. Pins are kind of a lost art form to a lot of bands. It's kind of like patches. Not all bands make 'em. I've pared it down to the Batman pin because that was the statement I wanted to make.

Todd: I was talking to Chuck from Hot Water Music a while back, and I noticed that he had a symbol tattooed on his arm of three arrows going in the same direction in a circle. To be honest with you, the reason I first listened to your EP, *Chorus of One*, was that

* Eric: Drums * Matt Smith: Guitar * Matt Sherwood: Guitar *
* Garth: Bass * Thomas: Vocals *



symbol was on your CD. What does it represent?

Thomas: It was a symbol that was used several different times in history. The earliest that was know of it — and I'm sure there are people who have researched it better — it was the anti-fascist movement. It was the Berlin progressive paper that was an organ against the lies of the Nazi party and the street violence and they got shut down right around, before or after, the Kristallnacht ("Night of Broken Glass" — refers to the organized anti-Jewish riots in Germany and Austria, November 9 and 10, 1938.) and were destroyed and taken to camps. They were the anti-Fascist resisters of that terror and they were also in places and cities all over Europe. And then, in Moscow there was a plaque I saw of the Jewish Anti-Fascist International and they were there from the '30s until '46/'47, when Stalin came to power and really took everybody to the gulag and said, "All right all y'all, there's no more bullshit. It's time to die." That's on the part of the radial streets in Moscow named for Peter Kropotkin, the anarchist and that's where the Jewish Anti-Fascist International met. The Redskins, the anti-fascist Communist skins in New York City in the '80s used that symbol a lot, too. And Chumbawamba, in their anarchist days — they're still in their anarchist days — but in their pre-radio-friendly anarchist days...

Todd: The pre-"soundtrack for the trailer promoting *Home Alone 3* anarchist days...

Thomas: They used that motherfucker. My friend, Joe, got to see them in the early '90s when he lived in London for awhile. He brought me back a t-shirt that had that symbol on it. So, it is everybody's symbol. We definitely wanted to bring it State-side and I think we want it to be known. I think that we either inferred or figured out through the cultural ether what the arrows mean.

Matt: Liberty, equality, and solidarity.

Thomas: And I don't know where we got that from.

Matt: It's kind of loose research online and looking through what historical documents we could find. That's actually a French slogan translated into English that's ancient as hell, too, by some socialists.

Todd: Liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Thomas: I think Chuck has that tattoo because we all met when I was in my old band, Inquisition, and Inquisition used that symbol a little and Chuck just got that tattoo in a passionate frenzy and I plan to get it too — same one, same place, eventually. Hot Water Music always has an understated identification with the working class and the roots of folk music, especially with the research that they do and their side project bands, Rumbleseat.

Todd: And The Blacktop Cadence.

Thomas: We hold a lot in common with that — that aggressive underground hardcore and punk, and rock music in general — has to

have a populist base. As artists, you create because of the voices all around you. It's not just some kind of abstracted inner artistic vision — that's a part of it, too, but it has a lot more to do with claiming the vitality of everyone around you and talking about issues in your community and just communicating.

Todd: Going off of that, I'm going to give you a date and you're going to tell me what happened on that date. April 2nd, 1864.

Thomas: That's the bread riot.

Todd: What has not fundamentally changed in those 138 years since a woman lead a protest by saying, "As soon as enough of us get together, we are going to the bakeries and each of us will take a loaf of bread"? What are some historic parallels that are still viable in Richmond in 2002?

Thomas: I would say that the bread riots were about a lot of different things, but including the Confederate army burning Richmond so the Union couldn't have it and hoarding the food from the rest of the people: the Africans that were still in the slavery system, the freedmen, the dissenters, and all the women — all over Richmond.

There were so many people in Richmond, and the South in general, that did not agree with the war, with either side. Or switched sides. Or were terrorized. My great, great, great uncle was one of them. He died in the Chimborazo Military Hospital, which is now a park in the old part of the city of Richmond. I would say that the rich have a lot of shit and they manipulate it really well and they keep their business completely secret and somehow legal — but it gets caught up every now and then and found out — and there's still a lot of voices and a lot of people that are trying to organize and crack it open and get the wealth and the food and life back.

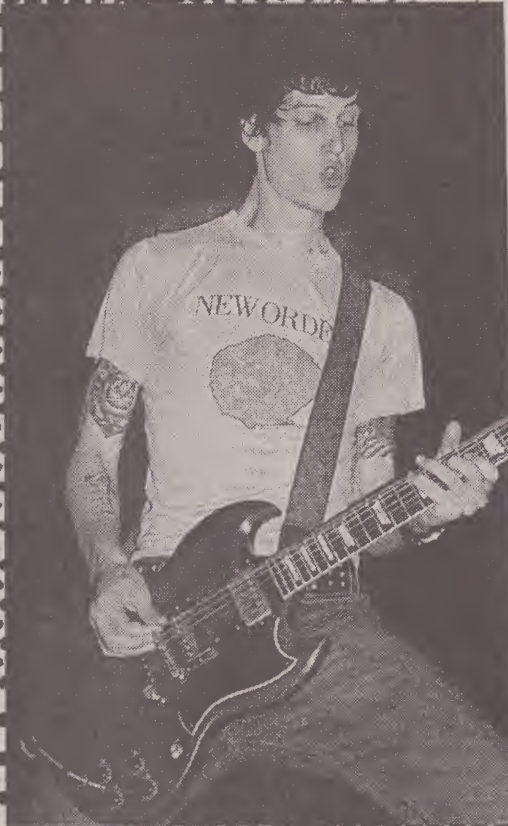
Todd: Food that otherwise would be feeding the city's residents was being commandeered by the military.

Thomas: We even develop cultural channels to encourage high demand in this or to discourage people learning how to fuckin' feed themselves or take care of each other. Everyone stays isolated. I helped start, with some friends, a community garden right before I left for this tour. In Church Hill, which is an old neighborhood in Richmond, which has been burned several times, we're applying the same ethic to the Food Not Bombs we have in Richmond,

radicalizing it, and moving it into low income neighborhoods and historically African American neighborhoods and getting people to remember about nutrition and about food just coming out of the ground and sharing it with each other.

Matt: And even just about cooking. About making food at home, preparing it. The rituals that go along with that and family and being involved in your neighborhood. All that good stuff, so that you just don't go down to the corner store and buy some crap and eat it.

Thomas: Or drive fifteen miles to a suburban strip mall to get some shit that's filled with pesticide and gives you cancer. It's just



strange that people lose touch with that and I think that's one of the first steps in people becoming machines, to work their treadmill, and remain isolated from each other.

Matt: The beautiful thing about the community garden, you don't even have to go to the over-the-top, gourmet health food store, either, and give them the money. You can just pull it out of the ground and go cook.

Thomas: The community garden is this tax-delinquent, abandoned property that's just been staring at me hungrily since I've moved into the part of the ghetto that I live in, and me and my friend Mark, who's in the band River City High — we were home for a weekend and we went to the Home Depot and the Richmond straight edgers work at this Home Depot and our bass player, Garth, is kind of like their overlord.

Matt: Tom just made that up.

Thomas: That's a bit of an exaggeration. Anyway, they let us use this fuckin' tiller. As long as we got it back by six, they wouldn't tell their manager, so we tilled up this ground. The last thing that had happened on this earth, aside from a lot of 40 oz. bottles being tossed in the weeds, was the houses burned down twenty years ago. It was very rich soil.

Todd: Another interesting thing I found out about the bread riot is that a lot of the troops from the Public Guard that were called in, their own wives were among the rioters.

Thomas: I think, a year later, when the war ended, April 4th, 1865, Lincoln walked through the town with his son, like the day after Richmond was liberated. It was a jubilee. All the freed Black folks were singing and dancing and it had to be the best day of that Lincoln's life because seven days later he was killed. But he was in Richmond and there's nothing in Richmond that talks about that, to commemorate his walk. He walked past the Devil's Half Acre — that was where all the enslaved Africans came to the South, through Richmond, right at the Manchester slave docks, walked through the night, and were put up on the blocks. There was a jail there. They were bought and sold and all that.

Matt: The cobble stones on our streets were the ballast in the ships, when they sailed away and were sailing in from inland.

Thomas: We played shows in Richmond at this place called Alley Katz, which is six and a half blocks southeast of the Devil's Half Acre. To finish the story, the war ended. Everybody was emancipated. The day after that, Lincoln and his son, Tad, marched through the town. The man who was the overseer/ businessman of the slave trade in Richmond turned to an African woman who had been his property for her entire lifetime, realizing he'd been very much in love with her for that whole time, married her in a fit of joy and powerful cultural defiance. That woman, after he passed away, turned that place into a school for Blacks in Richmond, during the Reconstruction, right before the Reconstruction went sour. Obviously, that is what informs us — whether it's subconsciously or whether it's right in the song. That's why we're a punk band from Richmond and why that matters and why it's different than being a punk band from anywhere else.

Todd: A lot of people forget that Richmond was the capital of the Confederacy.

Thomas: And there was so much misery and so much dissent on both sides of that. Nobody thinks about that shit. The people that go to schools in the North talk about the righteousness of the

Union, holding itself together, and freeing the slaves and Confederate pride, the confusion about heritage, the need to think that our great, great grandfathers weren't manipulated and they weren't fighting for a rich man's cause, which, essentially, they were. It's horrible to think about. I have several histories of different great, great grandfathers leaving the war, getting hunted down by mercenaries. One of them went out to Texas. The other one was shipped back up to Richmond after being captured and recaptured by the Union. He died. It's insane.

Matt: They actually just found a really complete diary of a captured Union soldier. He spent a lot of time in Confederate camps, did a bunch of watercolor paintings, and has insanely complete diaries, so it's a really nice picture of everyday life of a prisoner. It's not glamorous, but it's really interesting. Apparently, he was a really gifted illustrator, so he was tapped to do that.

Thomas: There's this island in the James River that we all go to, it's called Belle Island. It was actually called The Isle of Misery. It was a prison for captured Union officers.

Matt: They starved them to death.

Thomas: They also starved the city to death. Then they burned the fucking city. It's insane. At the same time, there's a lot of manipulation and bullshit on both sides and I don't think Abraham Lincoln was the clear-cut hero of it, either. A lot of people contend that it



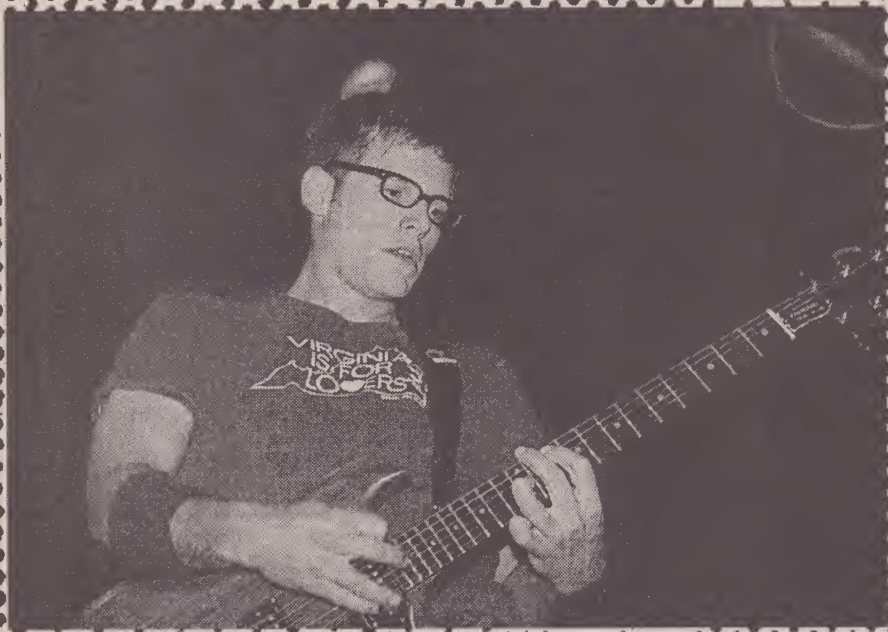
was the Fourteenth Amendment ("No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.") that freed the slaves and not the Emancipation Proclamation. It's frustrating.

Todd: How does the sleeping cop inside of you force you to do something almost against your will?

Matt: It doesn't let me relax properly. The sleeping cop, to me — I didn't write the words — there is an aspect of that. It's this abject perfectionism that you can't escape. It's kind of a more personal

thing. We don't really think a lot about adhering to rules, but you kind of naturally do. You've got rituals that don't really make sense but you function within them and if you don't do them exactly correctly, it can cause a lot of mental anguish.

Thomas: We have rituals that are emotional self defense things. All of us do it. Supposedly, they keep us on point, but they're basically control dramas that came out from traumas that have occurred to us. So, we try not to repeat patterns when we feel like we're going to get hurt. That isolates us. We need to ritualize being open more than ritualizing shutting down. Every aspect of our society, including its economy and the way we think we're organized, it's all about keeping us isolated and hateful of our emotions instead of embracing them and trying to work with them, like art. I think the sleeping cop is also the parts of me that feel too exhausted and don't let go of negative shit, but lies to myself so that I can't embrace really positive things. It goes through it like that. There are also aspects of the sleeping cop that are a lot more ideological. They have to do with standing on the treadmill and believing a lot of the myths about if you work hard, the system can work for you and will take care of you and all that shit and it doesn't work for millions and millions of Americans and it's like playing a lottery. That's how I feel, politically, the sleeping cop works in this country and this age.



Todd: The converse to that, what's the last fearless thing you've done?

Matt: I study kung fu. My instructor, we were doing applications where you actually pretend to be in a fight, which is sort of weird and I'm really terrible at fighting. Accidentally, I ended up kicking my older brother, who can beat the hell out of me if he wants to, right in the balls. And I just kind of looked at him and I felt really sorry, but I actually didn't feel afraid of retribution. Maybe I was just confident there wouldn't be any.

Thomas: I always feel painfully aware of my fears. Sometimes playing shows, even though we've played over 250 times.

Matt: Oh, playing as a four piece was the last fearless thing.

Thomas: We had to wait for Matt Smith to get off tour with his other band, Liar's Academy, and meet us in Sacramento, and we'd

never played live as a four piece and it worked out much better than we thought and it was an incredible time.

Todd: Did you feel extremely exposed, not to have the fifth member?

Thomas: We had to not just play our songs minus a second guitar, we had to reconstruct our identity as a band instantly. Almost like this version of ourselves. Not a version in an artificial way, but really embrace the idea of it to retain a wholeness and not be just, "We're missing a dude. Fuck it. As long as y'all mosh, it's cool." If it's a great show and there's something that I feel is fearless, it happens — where you walk right up to the middle of the maelstrom or maybe jump on someone's head that wants it. Or just singing along with people and just connecting in a way that is vulnerable and intense. And even though it seems ritualized from a distance, when you're in it, it's not. It could never be. I think that for a lot of people that detract from punk, and think that it's just a processed, consumer-driven, artificial thing, I don't think it's possible because there's so much creativity in this connection.

Todd: I hate to sound cheesy about it, but getting a hug from a good friend — someone you really care about — that's a ritual. You can see it on TV and in movies ten thousand times, but just because of that, it doesn't take away from the power of your personal relationships with people. If you mean it, that's what counts.

Thomas: Meaning is being taken away from all art and all culture because meaning gets in the way of profit and commerce on a gut level. Meaning makes people hold on to something. Meaning makes people go home with whatever tools they have and create something for themselves and not just consume the next product. That's fearless. That's why aspects of this are still frightening and when I can get through that and do it, it makes me happy and makes me feel like there's courage left.

Matt: People make those criticisms and they're totally legitimate — that you're going through a ritual, you're going through a cycle, you're participating in something that is a consumer culture and it seems that way. We're an anti-consumer band. We've got merch in the back, bling, bling.

Thomas: We said that in a political basement show and everyone laughed. 'Cause we try to bring it both ways. You have to have the self-awareness and self-analysis, but there's still hope, you know.... I got married in February. That was probably the biggest leap of faith

I've ever taken in my life. It's good. It's intense, emotionally, and I don't know why it is because we had this marriage that was devoid of any of the patriarchal rituals and had a very earthy, elemental, sacramental fabric. It was definitely something that we crafted ourselves, was casual, and was in our own home. That was probably the real, fearless thing I've done recently.

Todd: Do you work at a stained glass place?

Thomas: I did. My wife is a manager at a stained glass art studio. I worked shipping out art paper. Her boss was the owner of two separate companies. He owned an old warehouse, seven-and-a-half blocks away from the Devil's Half Acre. It's our focal point, subconsciously. We also practice there. It started getting to where we were getting all of our mail there. We wrote most of *Change Is a Sound* there and I'd work there forty, fifty, fifty-five hours a week for years and years and years, but right before we left for tour, we moved all the glass to a proper art studio and we had to move all of our stuff into the van. Now we don't

have a practice space. We're homeless as of right now. Every now and then, I will work for the stained glass studio, but not so often any more.

Todd: Matt, you have a degree in engineering?

Matt: Yeah.

Todd: Have you ever used those skills in this band?

Matt: I fix all of our equipment.

Todd: Electrical engineer?

Matt: Yeah. I'm expected to fix all of our equipment free of charge and then fast.

Thomas: We started making him bill the band. It worked better, emotionally.

Matt: I'm allowed to charge a little bit. Ten bucks apiece now, which is awesome.

Thomas: We could give you a raise.

Matt: No, no, I don't need a raise.

Todd: Do you bring your solder gun along on tour?

Matt: I do.

Thomas: Other bands are like, "We wanna tour with Strike Anywhere. We can get Matt to fix our shit. We really don't like that band, but Matt's in it."

Matt: Every now and then I'll over-extend myself and break something for somebody and they won't ever ask again. You'll definitely see me before shows, with stuff taken apart, with a soldering iron out, plumes of lead smoke rising up and out. I'm the dude when there's math to be done or something scientific to be explained.

Todd: Do you have you masters in it?

Matt: Just my bachelors. I worked in Northern Virginia a little over a year before the beginning of the band and I was actually designing spy gadgets. I was working for the intelligence community. And then I quit that to be in this band. All this stuff with Donald Rumsfeld and the fuckin' (Department of) Homeland Security (The mission of the Department of Homeland Security is to: "Prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism; and minimize the damage and recover from attacks that do occur.") There are so many institutional problems. I can tell you first-hand that they have not a hope in hell of pulling this together. They need to just scrap it all and start over because everyone involved with it is so self-interested, Rumsfeld can't possibly be successful. No information will be collected or assimilated in the interest of stopping innocent Americans from being killed, and that's their stated goal. They can try, but I don't think it'll happen, 'cause people would come to my work and they'd be all, "We want a death beam."

Thomas: No bullshit.

Matt: "We'll give you twenty million dollars if you build us a death beam." The senior engineers would be like, "Sure. Just give us twenty million." Of course, they knew it was totally unreasonable, but they needed the money to stay in business. The intelligence community operates that way. They're asked for these devices and they'll contract these research and development companies to build this specialized equipment. A legitimate outcome of research is the fact you can't realize the entire object that was contracted for. So, that'd be like, "Take this scientific principle and build us something that can drill through walls without actually touching them, with water."

Thomas: Or using microwaves at riots.

Todd: Really?

Matt: Yeah. That's a new riot control device. I never had anything to do with that, but that's some new shit they're pulling out. They're going to start cooking protesters. It was just ridiculous and people's attitudes were so bad and people's politics were terrible. They had no compassion. They were utterly self-interested to the exclusion of everything else, even future generations, their own children. Nobody had any compassion. It was bizarre.

Thomas: That shit's cold.

Matt: I was sitting there, getting made fun of because I had this spirulina. "You eating that green shit again?" I'm like, "Dude, I'm just listening to music and working on CAD (computer-assisted design). Leave me alone."

Thomas: And they're interested in something that automatically spikes the tires of someone going over the border.

Matt: Technology's crazy. People don't even know. It sounds like *X-Files*, but it's not. It was actually a really interesting job, but I'm glad that I left.

Todd: I have a feeling that Strike Anywhere is getting musical influences from a lot of different places. How do you get those disparate influences from overcoming the aesthetic of the band? What type of checks and balances do you have band-wise?

Matt: We fight like fucking dogs when we write. It's painful.

Thomas: We know it's not personal.

Matt: Seriously, writing songs in this band is one of the most painful things that I do in my life and I love it and I love what we end up with, but it's so hard.

Thomas: The process is insane.

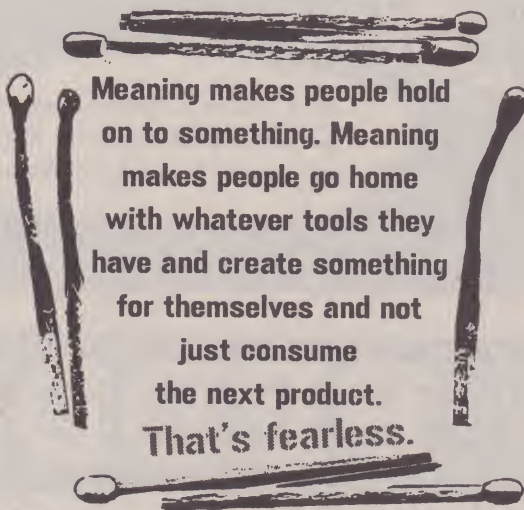
Matt: 'Cause we all care a lot.

Thomas: It's so full of checks and balances and everyone swings to every side. "These songs suck, these songs rule. My songs suck, your songs rule. Your songs suck, my songs rule." Nonstop. All of us get so passionate, and so far it works out to this balance, this clarity. I don't know how it's happened. It's like weather patterns. We also joke among ourselves - it's probably more than partially true - we're like ambassadors of the different aspects of the subculture. We're different ages. We all have different influences. Ideologically, we're from the same base,

even though we have different shades, but it's important to be in a band with dudes that don't all listen to the same five records and don't agree on the bands you want to sound like. I think we're trying to be inclusive of all the punk music, folk music, and rock'n'roll - all that shit we love. At once sometimes, and in fragments. I love it.

Matt: That's pretty much how it pans out. We just put it all together in a big pot and cook it with our hatred.

Thomas: We'll write songs or parts of songs, two or three of us at a time. We all play guitar. We all put parts on the table. It's pretty democratic at that point, and then everyone goes, "That shit sucks." The other two people will shelve that shit forever, thinking, "It's never going to happen." And then the people that hated it the most will be like, eight months later, "Let's bring that shit back. What're you doing?" And it goes back and forth - and that's why we have everything from fuckin' street punk and oi and early '77 punk that I grew up on and loved and Four Walls Falling, a Richmond straight edge hardcore band that was the first Jade Tree LP, that were under-rated as hell in America and really popular in Europe. There is so much that influences us all the time and that's what's really fantastic about playing with these



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fellows. We write a lot on acoustic. Even the real fast, aggressive songs, a lot of them get started that way. In fact, we wrote some of the record with acoustic guitars in the van.

Matt: The downfall of writing on acoustic is that if you get too involved in the details, when you take it to electric, sometimes the details can't come through the same way and if it hinges on those details, it loses some of the niceness of the song.

Thomas: Just to cap that, in the end, we also try to listen each other's influences and know that as much as we mean it and as much as we're passionate about what each of us writes, it's not going to be good without everybody else.

Todd: What was the first show you realized a bunch of people began pointing back at the lead singer when there was a breakdown?

Matt: Four Walls Falling — all I remember was Taylor in the middle of this big heap of people clamoring for the mic. He would hold it out. He's a spindly little vegan dude with a powerful voice, but he would just get mobbed constantly. Every song, people would sing along.

Thomas: Most of those things are true for some of our DC and Richmond shows. For me, I seem to have inherited his style. We had a really interesting, home-grown version of the '88 straight edge scene in Richmond that had a lot of heart and a lot of political awareness that went further — not to disrespect our elders — than the New York straight edge bands, beyond just the "go vegetarian" and "stay positive," but discussions of capitalism in 1988 in a hardcore band were amazing. Four Walls Falling went to Europe, and then we heard about bands from the Netherlands like Man Lifting Banner, a communist straight edge band. And I was never straight edge. I was always one of the punk kids, sneaking beers in the back alley behind the club, but it still meant so much to all of us. And now, me and those punk kids that were in Inquisition together are now in Ann Beretta, River City High, and Sixer. I'm in a band that sonically and ideologically resembles the stuff we grew up on in Richmond, particularly, but it's still a part of the fabric of each of us.

Todd: Has anybody threatened to cut your hair?

Thomas: Like jackasses at a show? No. My bandmates sometimes have. Jesus, my mother-in-law always does, but she's kind of a wacky lady. I've had dreads for ten years. My cousin, from Gambia, she came in 1991. She put them in my hair.

Todd: What is your direct connection with The Black Crowes? You have met and worked with some person who has worked with them.

Thomas: John Morand, the producer for *A Chorus of One*. He also made Inquisition records. They're the studio that Avail's recording their new record in. It's the Richmond studio that David Lowery from Cracker came down and started in an old warehouse with vintage equipment and gifted engineers. John Morand's the producer of The Black Crowes, us, the solo record for the woman who sings for the Cardigans, and other really obscure, talented people rolling through Richmond. He was one of the first generations of punk rockers from Richmond in '77. There's a picture of him in the paper from Freeman High School, "Punks! What is this!?" A picture of him with a trench coat. Just a

trench coat. But back then it didn't matter, you could have just a trench coat and it was scary. So, he knew where we were coming from on that shit.

Todd: Do you have the nickname, Fangy?

Thomas: How the fuck do you know these things? There's a lot of different nicknames for me. Fangy T is one of them. Our friend Max was recording a 7" for us. When I was recording vocals, he would turn the mic off, so everyone in the control room could hear them, but not me, and he said, "Thomas is just fangin' in there." Everyone's like, "Tom, stop fangin'." And I never knew what it meant. It must be the stupid way I make my face when I scream.

Todd: What's the story behind the song, "Sunset on 32nd"?

Thomas: They were doing a racial profiled drug dragnet shake-down. Any Black male between the ages of twelve to thirty that's riding a bicycle, they assume is a runner for the corners — for the drug trade. There are corners in our neighborhood. There are runners. Maybe some of them are on bikes. Many, many of the kids got arrested for these arcane bike violations that would never have been applied to anyone in any other neighborhood, or any white kid riding a bike, anywhere. It was horrible. Harold, our neighbor from across the street, had to get diapers for one of his kids. They have two daughters. He went and came back. His bike's brakes were fucked. It was a pretty old bike. The police, I guess, had followed him back to his house and he went into his home and they broke down the door, ran into his house, flashed their weapons in front of Chanté and their kids, Tiosha and Niasia. They went into the back, where he was, and pulled him onto the carpet in the hallway and beat him and then dragged him out of the house. Six or seven cops. He's a big man. He works at Lowe's. We would hang out with them all the time. We'd have them over. They were great neighbors. We would take care of the kids sometimes, too. They'd come over and play with our dogs.

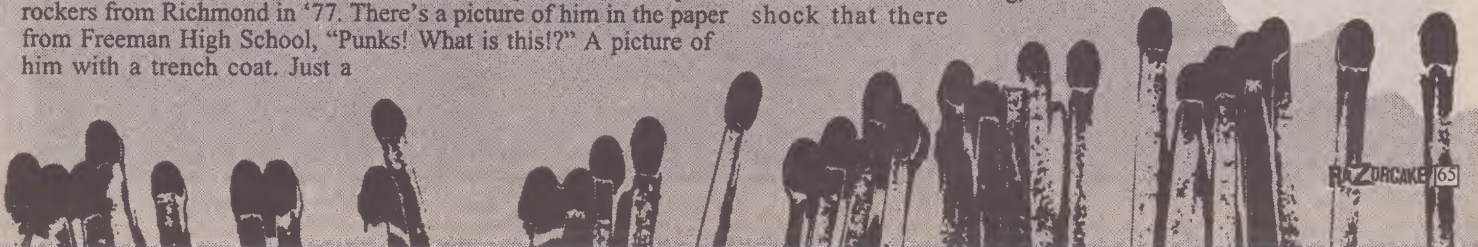
We heard this because we were taking a nap in the back room at my house. We heard them — from inside their house from across the street to inside our house — he's screaming, "I'm not resisting you. Please stop beating me." It was the most horrible thing to hear someone say that. Ever. Here's a strong, kind, intelligent, proud man. Proud of his family. They were filled with life, this whole family was. We were good friends with them for about a year and a half.

The police saw me and Leslie come out of the house and they kind of stopped kicking him a little. They had three cop cars, about six or seven

police, including the sergeant, who is the head of that district in Church Hill. He's an unbelievable racist, who's gone to the local bar in our neighborhood and said, "We've been pushin' 'em back North ever since the '60s," referring to the collusion between real estate investment in the historic neighborhood and racist police practices, driving people of color out of the neighborhoods that their grandfathers and grandmothers have lived in. It's horrible. Because of our skin color, I'm assuming, and the shock that there

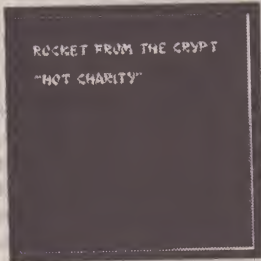


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were Caucasian folks in the neighborhood watching them beat down a citizen, they stopped. We walked right through them with the most intense disgust and rage I've probably ever felt and contained in my life. We went over and picked up their kids. How do you call the cops on the cops? So, we called the media and we tried a program called "Channel 12: On Your Side." We called the newspaper. We called our city councilwoman and we left a couple messages. We got a few callbacks. Nobody was interested. It happens all the goddamn time. Our heroic police force is doing a great job on the war on drugs. This is just collateral damage. One of the cops said, "I thought he had a gun. I thought he was running into this house to take these people hostage." It's his fucking home. They said the most worthless excuses.

Todd: And I'm assuming that if you're getting some Pampers, the package is pretty big.

Thomas: Groceries and diapers. Anyway, the police had a lot of fabricated shit about the incident. They took him to the hospital first. They cleaned him up. They took him to jail. He stayed there overnight for resisting arrest. Chanté had to testify in court. It destroyed their life because they didn't have the money to fix the door before the landlords came. The landlords kicked them out because the door was broken off the hinges. They had to move North to the projects, which is the intention of police actions like this in every neighborhood in America. Me and Leslie would take their kids to the park and take them to work when we could. We got Chanté a job.

They broke up. Harold actually started getting into fights. There was gunplay in the neighborhood. He went to jail. She found another boyfriend, and I don't know what happened. The drug trade got in their lives, where once, it wasn't. Where once, they were a nuclear family, working and filled with happiness and potential. The last thing we heard, the kids ended up in a foster home. Those kids who were like our godkids. They're gone. We can never find them. It's insane. It just breaks our heart. We helped them financially and with our friendship for a long time, and we tried to get local activist groups involved, and all it basically turned into was a song that we sang and a warning and that is the most frustrating thing. And the line in that song about, "holding your family close to your heart," is the most critical therapy for this event for me.

I can't begin to imagine what it meant for them to go through this. We just saw this. We're across the street. And we hate those fucking cops with our guts. We see them at the Church Hill diner and just look the other way. There are a lot of people in Richmond

that are curious about this event and we've talked to so many people about it, and there's awareness building. The Councilwoman was generous with us and there's a sense that maybe with incidents like this — there was another shooting of a man, Levester Carter Jr., was shot to death by a police woman in Richmond. Actually, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference came in and rallied there the week before we left for tour and he was shot. He was a man that had some outstanding warrants in DC. The police pulled him over and he ran and as he ran, they emptied a clip into him and when he was on the ground, she emptied another clip into him. This woman, a police officer, was awarded a medal for heroism for shooting a man in the back. And he was armed and he had outstanding warrants, but he was running. One shot or a warning, whatever, it's understandable in this context. So, that's what we're faced with and what every community's faced with. This is just our experience in Richmond in particular.

Todd: What are you going to do, as a band, from becoming your own parody or cliché? What are you doing internally in keeping the band vital?

Thomas: We talk about this a lot. We have a self-awareness. We make fun of ourselves to ourselves constantly. We are the first band

to joke on our own songs. We make crazy fun of our songs. We know that there is a lot of vitriol and aggression and love for humanity that drives us — and a love for how flawed and stupid and silly punk still needs to be. It has to be something that is self-aware and it has to be something that has ideals, but isn't just like a humorless political movement or a backdrop to a bunch of people mimicking a political movement. We are really aware of those potentials and it's conflicting and strange and we write songs that we give our hearts, trying to diffuse any sense of musical tactics or the hidden aspects of being a product. We try to get that out of music and still play what we love and tell the stories that we have to. That catharsis is what punk's really about and it has to start from a personal level. I think we're still trying

to do that — and learning from each other and making this a part of our lives, not just like a business or artistic venture or some combination of either. We're making it a part of our lives, our adventure in the world, and still retaining our humility about it and to know that we're just a small part of it and we're happy to add whatever momentum we can because it meant so much to us.



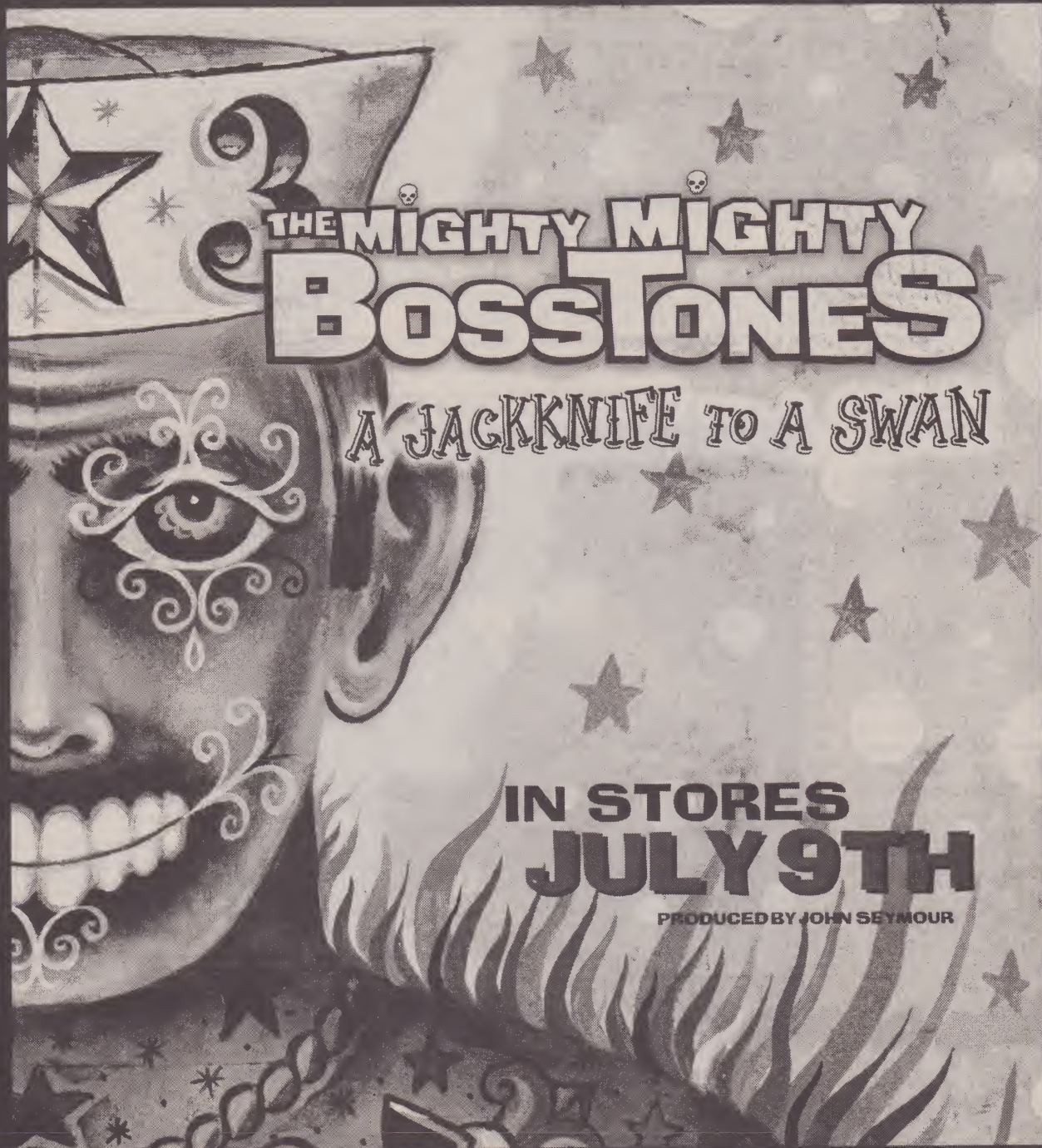
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Dee Dee Ramone

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I first met Dee Dee Ramone in the basement of the now defunct New York City venue Coney Island High. I was half out of my mind on the cheap and strong drinks that made that place so much fun in the early going (Vodka and tonics were my drink of choice that night, if I'm not mistaken), when my friend nudged me and said, "Look who's standing next to you!"

I was in a state. "Who?" I asked.

"That's Dee Dee, man. Dee Dee Ramone."

There are moments in one's life one will never forget, when everything falls perfectly into place and are just so right that you'd swear they never happened at all. The DJ was playing "Be My Baby" by the Ronettes. I turned to Dee Dee and spoke.

"Hey, when are you gonna make another rap album?"

"I'm never doing anything again!" declared Dee Dee. "I'm lucky to be alive!"

Furious George used to practice in the same basement I used to call home and some drunken night along the way, George Tabb and I came up with a less than wonderful song entitled "Betty Crocker, Punk Rocker." It wasn't long before Furious George were recording the same stupid song for their Lookout EP. Somehow, George arranged for Dee Dee to sing backup vocals. Even though I (thankfully) wasn't in the band, I was thrilled.

After much anticipation, on the appointed day, Dee Dee and his wife Barbara arrived at the recording studio to lay down his vocals. George played him the recording as the other members of the band and myself sat somewhat in awe of Dee Dee.

When the song had reached its dénouement Dee Dee turned to George and said, in classic Dee Dee fashion, "George, I know you're a writer, so you can quote me: I'm not impressed."

In spite of that, when the first issue of Dee Dee's color-photocopied fanzine, *Taking Dope*, hit the streets, the phrase "Betty Crocker, Punk Rocker" was emblazoned over several pages. I couldn't have been more proud.

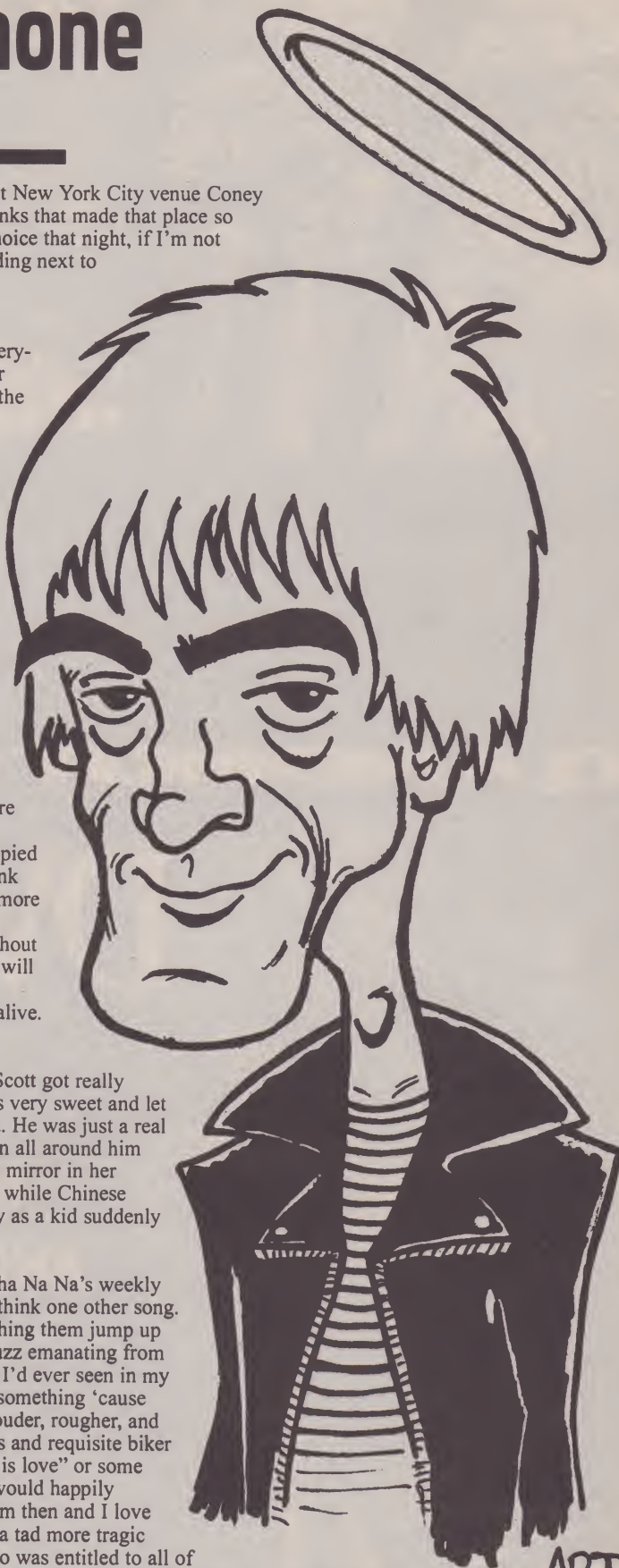
When Dee Dee left the Ramones the band seemed less fun. Without trying to be maudlin or overly sentimental, I suspect that the world will seem just a little less fun too now that Dee Dee's gone.

He's never doing anything again but we were *all* lucky he was alive.

-Matt Braun, *Dick Army*

I met Dee Dee in Long Beach when I was dating Scott Drake. Scott got really jealous because he said Dee Dee was flirting with me. Dee Dee was very sweet and let me steal all the beer (Heinekens or Becks!) from the backstage area. He was just a real easygoing guy — completely oblivious of the adoration and adulation all around him from a punk rock worshipper like myself, who posed in front of the mirror in her Chucks and bass guitar, doing the Dee Dee feet-spread-apart stance while Chinese Rock-ing out. I'll miss him. It's like a part of your happiest memory as a kid suddenly keeling over and dying for good. —Miss Namella J. Kim

I remember seeing/hearing The Ramones for the first time on Sha Na Na's weekly television variety show. They did "Rock'n'roll High School" and I think one other song. I remember sitting there in front of the TV in the living room, watching them jump up and down in those leather jackets, listening to that *monster* guitar fuzz emanating from the television speaker and thinking it was one of the greatest things I'd ever seen in my life. Better than *Kiss Meets the Phantom* by miles, which is saying something 'cause Kiss was my favorite band at the time. The Ramones just seemed louder, rougher, and way more real. They looked like the anti-Beatles with those haircuts and requisite biker leathers, street bums who could give a rat's ass about "all you need is love" or some hippie crap like that. They were modern-day lords of Queens who would happily shank you and then sing a seriously rockin' tune about it. I loved 'em then and I love 'em now. In the grand scheme of things, I think Dee Dee's death is a tad more tragic than Joey's, in that Dee Dee's was preventable. Here was a man who was entitled to all of the rights and privileges associated with being a "living legend," a man who helped change the face of rock'n'roll specifically and western culture in general by giving it all a sorely needed kick in the ass. I'm gonna miss him. What a damn shame. —Jimmy Alavarado



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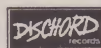
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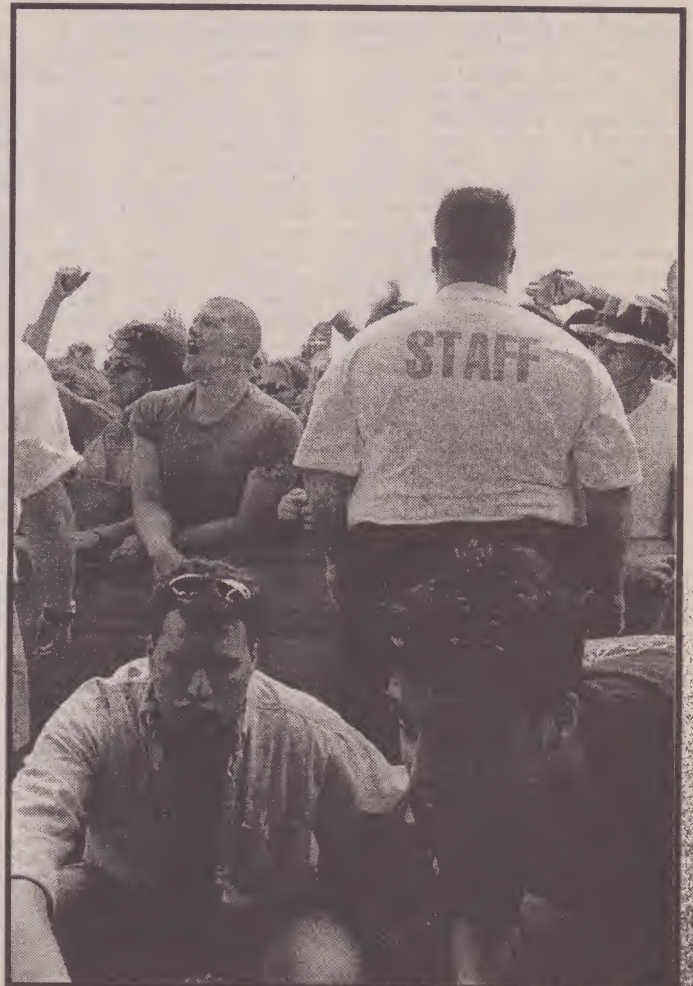
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Photo Page



I have no idea who these people are watching and I don't think they do either.

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 —Donofthedeat (AVD)

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 Another band from the old days comes up with a new release and this one ain't so bad. Monkey's voice sounds different, but the music's still the same anthemic punk rock the Adicts are known for. Only thing is I'd swear that the version of "Falling in Love Again" is the same one from way back when.
 —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

AGAINST ME!: Reinventing Axl Rose: CD
 From the opening riff, when the ghosts of "Folsom Prison Blues" segue into a mid-tempo hardcore songs, it's clear that this is not an ordinary album. Comparisons are hard to make. Sure, there are elements of folk guitar, but this is no Pogues rip-off. Sure, you can tell the singer has spent years singing along with Fugazi, but this is no emo record. Sure, the Clash drips off the edges of this CD, but that's not what defines these songs. No matter what point of reference I try to launch from to describe this album — from "a hillbilly Husker Du" to "the black bloc throwing bricks through a Replacements record" — it all seems to fall short. And that's a good thing. Considering how much new music I listen to, I'm amazed that I can hear something that's this original and that's this good. The songs are all well-written with thoughtful lyrics, catchy hooks, vocals that are tuneful even when the singer's voice is ripped through to the chords, and a really happy guitar and a bouncing rhythm section backs it all up. I guess the best way to describe this album is this: these are the campfire songs I want to sing while the society around me burns itself to the ground. —Sean (No Idea)

ATOM AND HIS PACKAGE: Hamburgers: CDEP
 A quick Atom synopsis: It's one guy and a sequencer/mixer, accompanied sometimes by a guitar. You wouldn't be too far off supposing he's like a punk rock Weird Al Yankovic or a one man Dead Milkmen, but you wouldn't hit the nail on the head, either. What impresses me with Atom is that he opens me up a little bit to things I patently loathe — like dance music, beats, and straight-up indie rock — and incorporates them catchily into a song called "I'm Downright Amazed at What I Can Destroy with a Hammer." I'll be honest, the first several listens, I wasn't that

RAZORCAKE [72] gripped with this EP.



If you're a fucked up fucker who's been fucked with, fucked, and fucked over, fuck this fucking shit and buy the album. —Namella J. Kim

The songs — except the hammer song — seemed a little flat, falling into too similar musical grooves, but when I popped it on the headphones, I liked it much more. For someone who's known for pretty hard-to-miss parody — like the song "If You Own the Washington Redskins, You're a Cock" off the excellent *Redefining Music* — I found myself enjoying the musical nuances and how he layers the instruments and loops on top of one another. Not bad. Not bad at all. —Todd (File 13)

BACKSEAT BASTARDS: Fuel Injected Action: 7"
 A four-song seven inch boasting the likes of The Cramps, Dick Dale, and a gang of garage heads getting together to rage while the singer rips off the liquor cabinet and yer Dad's secret porn stash right down to the very last drink/mag. Music that makes you drag your knuckles and groove and bob around with your ass high up in the air (a dance affectionately known as The Schlep, invented by fellow brothers Chris Vonovich and Todd Agajanian). My favorite jam here is "Monkey Shake." A fine party platter, indeed, only if it is only seven inches. Good tunes here, you bastards. —Designated Dale (Fanboy)

BALZAC: Terrifying! The Art of Dying / The Last Men on Earth II: CD
 Still obsessed with the Misfits and Samhain? You have every item related to those bands known to mankind? How about trying a band that is still together? They have a fan club called "Fiendish Club," dolls and all the merchandise a fanatic could latch on to. Many reading this are probably saying that I already know about this band. This is intended for those not in the know. First off, this band put together two things that I am interested in — Japanese things and punk rock. Mix that in with a worship for Glenn Danzig, the Misfits and Samhain. They have devil locks and their skulls are similar to the Misfits. The music is similar to a point. But they take it further to add their own punch. What is presented here is a re-recording of their long out of print first album, *The Last Men on Earth*. The songs were re-done to give it more punch. Included in the

second disc is a bonus release of nine songs to give the listener more to cherish. All this is packaged together in a special release box. Now go scour the internet and get this. Horrorwood Distribution sells Balzac stuff in the states. As good as an ice cold beer!
 —Donofthedeat (Diwphalanx)

BAZOOKAS: Beach Blanket Blast-Off: 7"
 It's simple, really. Sometimes, a sub-genre of punk rock can be so inundated with mediocrity that fans will dismiss it altogether. Sometimes, a band will come along and blast through the mediocrity and lend credence to that sub-genre again. That's clearly what's happening with the Bazookas. They take four surf punk songs and shred through them with speed and finesse. They're like Johnny Boy Gomes at Pipeline, swinging a bottom turn and setting up for the barrel when most people would struggle like hell to kick out of the wave. —Sean (Fanboy)

BLACK KEYS, THE: The Big Come Up: CD
 I recently returned from a five-day, sin-filled excursion to New Orleans where the abundant bayous and waterways are densely shaded in a thick forest of moss-enshrouded cypress trees. It's a unique and archaic region of the Deep South where dragonflies aimlessly buzz through the droopy, humid air and the spicy smell of boiling crawfish seems to forever linger heavily in the atmosphere throughout all hours of the day. So I'm here to tell you all, The Black Keys perfectly capture the magical, forbidden, and mysterious essence of the fetid, snake-infested river bottoms of Dixie country. This hoodoo-daddy duo authentically replicates the sparse, poverty-stricken sounds of an old, gnarled black man sittin' on the front porch of his ramshackle shanty-shack and musically moanin'-and-groanin' to the all-natural rhythm of a mid-summer night's howlin' wind. But these two disheveled white-boy minstrels add enough of a flavorfully piquant dash of lean and mean, blue-eyed aggression to the mix that it flawlessly gels into a sumptuous swirl of Mississippi mudwater garage-blues. The vocals are soulful,

pained, emotional, and profusely drenched in gritty, downtrodden manliness. The gut-tormentin' guitar wails, weeps, and shrieks, but it ultimately cavorts like a sun-baked alligator slithering through the dark, murky waters of an uninhabited backwoods marsh. The shuffling, loose-steppin' drums mercilessly pitter-patter along like huge drops of torrential rain ricocheting off the tin roof of a dilapidated old chicken shed stuck way out in the boonies somewhere all by its lonesome. Mercy, mercy me; I've now heard this century's Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, and Jimi Hendrix all rolled into one (but "Busted" could very well be a long-lost outtake from ZZ Top's first album, "Leavin' Trunk" sounds uncannily like Cream's "Politician", and the blazin' ragtag rendition of The Beatles' "She Said, She Said" is raucously southern-fried to all-out exquisite magnificence!). Indeed, this hot and zesty CD pristinely possesses the bare-bones, back-to-basics sound of long, dusty dirt roads, vast overgrown stretches of thriving cotton fields, and grandiose Southern antebellum architecture surrounded by squalor, misery, heartache, and hardships aplenty. Pass the jug, Uncle Jed, I'm a-comin' home. —Roger Moser, Jr. (Alive)

BLAZING HALEY: Mas Chingon: CD
 Don't worry, although Blazing Haley loosely fit into the psychobilly/rockabilly mold, they don't play like they're recording an episode for the Halloween episode of *Happy Days* or making songs that could be used to sell Cheez Whiz to folks with pompadours, nor do they sound like they spend too much time deliberating on the height of their jeans' cuffs. Balls, bite, and drive overcome all that. They're my reigning favorite if I want a change of pace from straight-ahead punk, to something infused with more country. They come across more authentic and stylistically together than Tiger Army, and have more diverse tempos and are less schlocky than The Slanderin'. Go right to the top. They remind me of prime Reverend Horton Heat — bluegrass stains on their knees, there's amazing dexterity in their fingers without becoming flashy, and they're able to pull off slower songs that come out of the stereo like smoke rising off a single cigarette in a still room. When they pick up, lead singer Matt Armor picks up a classic Greg Graffin of Bad Religion tone to his voice that somehow fits right in with Dave Kruger's frantic standup bass. Okay, I'll say it. If you wish X had written a good song in the last fifteen years and Exene was muted, you'd be listening to Blazing Haley whenever you slick you hair back. Cool stuff. —Todd (Rode to Ruin)

BLUE COLLAR SPECIAL: self-titled: CD
 When you pull out a pile of CDs to review and you find yourself hitting repeat and it's not until the fourth play that you realize you should move on, well, that's a good sign. These guys remind me of Circle Jerks (esp. "Wonderful"), D4, All, NoFX's best stuff and not so much the Freeze but later bands that were inspired by the Freeze. A few bits make me think these guys also listen to Tool and country. I

like NoFX's *Heavy Petting Zoo* a lot and would imagine that if that album were harder, rougher around the edges, and made with less goofiness and more sense of purpose, this would be the album. (Which is to say, if you like NoFX you should like them, but if you don't, you probably will, too.) The final track's reggae influence seems more from the Choking Victim school than straight reggae. Various songwriting credits explain how one band can have such a range while maintaining a "sound" that works consistently. My one complaint with this album is that it should be much longer. —Rich Mackin (Destroy All)

B-MOVIE RATS, THE: *Bad for You*: CD

The aurally unforgiving, raucously roarin', sick, twisted, and sinister sounds of The B-Movie Rats are cacophonously comparable to all-out rock'n'roll Armageddon! It's cranked-up, out-of-control, and violently frenzied; a hedonistic heapin'-helpin' of belligerence, bravado, and robust recklessness; explosive, percussive, concussive, and wildly exuberant; Iggy And The Stooges of the now generation; an auditory disaster just waitin' to happen! After only one intense and fiery listen, I'm spastic, speechless, and covered from head-to-toe in self-produced slobbery-slick drool. Take me to rehab, Ma, 'cause my ears are lethally addicted to The B-Movie Rats, and I'm shamelessly enjoyin' it waaaaay too much! This is better than the most ingratiating and tantalizing aspects of sex, booze, and rock'n'roll, I shit you not. —Roger Moser, Jr. (Junk)

BOB LOG III/ ZEN GUERRILLA: *Split 7"*

Jesus Chronky it's a great fuckin record! Bob Log works his wiggly magic on "Wiggin Room" and then Zen G pulls some kind of jack-in-the-box number with the oddly weird "Pocketful of String," a song that sounds like nothing else they've ever done (that I know of). I wouldn't be surprised if it's a cover, but I don't recognize it. If you like either of these folks, try very hard to get up on this. —Cuss Baxter (Fanboy)

BOSS MARTIANS:

Making the Rounds: CD

All right, rock and roll with lots of surf/instrumental influences, but way too tight for my tastes. I prefer my rock and roll/garage a little more crazy and sloppy. If this were a cereal, it'd be regular Cheerios. Okay. —Maddy (Musick)

BRAZEN HUSSIES: self-titled: CD-R EP

I unexpectedly received this homemade musically diverse disc in the mail today from many miles across the vast, tempestuous Atlantic Ocean (from London of England, to be exact!). So I hurriedly rushed home and excitedly plopped this auditory delight into my CD changer. Boy, were my ears pleasantly surprised by the sheer varying magnitude of the mentally deranged sounds the Brazen Hussies spastically spew forth! The first and last songs sound like a mellow, laid-back cross-pollination of the wry sonic commentary of The Kinks during the late '60s and the

crazed, psychotic acoustic ramblings of "Madcap Laughs"—era Syd Barrett. The remaining three tracks are loopy, funky, trippy, psychedelic, experimental, and undeniably British with a grungy scattering of Black Sabbath-style riffage tossed into the mix. And throughout it all, I definitely detect hardy hints of The Pixies, Nine Inch Nails, Butthole Surfers, and Joan Of Arc vivaciously blended with a circus-like swirl of old-time dance-hall liveliness and '70s-style blaxploitation soul-sister choral harmonies. Hell yeh, this is one of the most eclectic and intriguing aural treats that's ever salaciously serviced my ears. —Roger Moser, Jr. (Brazen Hussies)

BRIEFS: *Love and Ulcers*: 7"

The more I hear from 'em, the more I love 'em. Title track: More Voidoids-damaged mid-tempo punk rock. B-side: good, driving punk that seems to have just a dash of Beach Boys in it as well. You've gotta love a song with the chorus "God bless the fucked up USA." Yet another winner from these guys; one of the only reasons why Seattle shouldn't be wiped off the face of the earth. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dirtnap)

BUNNY FIVE COAT: *Negative Attention*: CD

Hey, I didn't know L7 changed their name. Where's all the metal licks? —Jimmy Alvarado (www.bunnyfivecoat.com)

BUSINESS:

Suburban Rebels: CD

This band's first album is released yet again, this time by Captain Oi! in a nice digipak format with an "album sized poster" of the cover to boot. Although the sound doesn't seem to have been changed any and, aside from the packaging, I see no other significant changes, it is nice to know that this is still readily available to anyone who wants it, as it was and is one of British oi/punk's high points. Recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

CADAVERS, THE: *Never Mind the Bodies, Here's...*: 7"

If you ever wondered what the Bodies sound like with a backup girl singer — it's pretty fuckin' cool. Coupled to Abe's higher-than-normal-for-street-punk singing is the tough-but-distinctly-female yelling of Tannia. No lyrics are included, but from what my secret decoder ring can figure out, they cover the same imagistic lines of the Bodies — betrayal, Vietnam, guns, and patriotism. Fast, snappy, and catchy. Little time is wasted and the harmonies are hard to miss. It's both hard and sweet. I always think that if the Bouncing Souls hadn't given up trying to write good songs about four years ago, you'd get this band (well, The Bodies, who this band sorta became later on). Apparently this was originally released in 1993, but it's being re-released in a batch of five hundred on this label. Not bad. —Todd (Noma Beach)

CAPITOL CITY DUSTERS, THE: *Rock Creed*: CD

Somewhere in Washington D.C. there are, presumably, a handful of girls related to, or even worse, romantically involved with, some or all of the members of The Capitol City Dusters, dread-

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2. *Spits, 19 Million A.C.* (Dirtnap)
3. *Bomb Pops, Everything Looks Like Her* (Rapid Pulse)
4. *Briefs, She's Abrasive* (Dirtnap)
5. *Briefs, Love and Ulcers* (Dirtnap)
6. *Mike Rep & the Quotas, Mama was a Schitzo* (Old Age)
7. *Shrapnel, Combat Love* (****)
8. *Teenage Rejects, Teen Trash Vol 2* (Alien Snatch)
9. *Tyrades, I Got a Lot* (Broken Rekids)
10. *Fuses, Communists Don't Dance* (Slamdance Cosmopolis)
11. *Hymans, I Don't Need Anybody Like You* (Diapazam)
12. *Cadavers, Never Mind The Bodies...* (Noma Beach)
13. *Le Shok, S&M* (Slamdance Cosmopolis)
14. *Automatics UK, Wild One* (Diapazam)
15. *RocknRoll Hero Man, self-titled* (Diapazam)
16. *Loose Lips, Addicted to You* (Just Add Water)
17. *Decay, self-titled* (SS)
18. *M-80's, Big Bang* (Backstreet)
19. *Moorat Fingers, Acting Duschbag* (Big Neck)
20. *Tyrades, Stain on Me* (Rip Off)

Disgruntled Mailorder, California

1. *Lube, Music of Chance* (Revenge)
2. *Sex Pistols, Schools Are Prisons* (S.T.P.)
3. *The Numbers, Letters* (Stereodrive)
4. *Les Sexareenos, We Gonna Ball* (Corduoy)
5. *Smogtown, Black Ball* (Hostage)
6. *Neon King Kong, Mix up the Mix* (GSL)
7. *Tyrades, Detonation* (Big Neck)
8. *Beltones, Shitty in Pink* (Radio)
9. *Strike Anywhere, Underground Europe 2001* (Scene Police)
10. *A Feast Of Snakes, Bow Legged Woman* (Dropkick)
11. *Richmond Sluts, Sweet Something* (Disaster)
12. *Cadavers, Never Mind the Bodies...Here's the Cadavers* (NomaBeach)
13. *Peepshows, Surrender My Love* (Stereodrive)
14. *Zeke, Rock & Roll Catastrophe* (Black Lung)
15. *Moorat Fingers, I Don't Know* (Radio Blast)
16. *Rebel Truth, Doing It for the Kids* (THD)
17. *Hookers, God Made Me the Raven* (Get Hip)
18. *Antidote, Let's Get Drunk* (Dirty Faces)
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ing the next gig. I feel their pain. At least I did for 41 minutes and 30 seconds. What you need to know: "I've got the heart of a revolutionary, but I'm singing like a yellow canary." File this under "For those who forgot to rock" and steer clear. —Money (Dischord)

CHRONICS, THE: *It's Too Late: LP*

Really great '78 or '79 style punk rock and roll! Think: The Real Kids, Pagans, Dickies, Stiv Bators. These songs keep getting stuck in my head and I go around all day trying to think of what band it is, thinking it's some late seventies group, and then I remember, it's the Chronics! All right! I'm pretty sure they're from Sweden, too, and we all know that Scandinavian bands can rock (see Turbonegro)! If this were a cereal, it'd be Fruit Loops! Yum! —Maddy (Demolition Derby)

CIRIL: self-titled: CD

What we have here is a pissed-off band that at first reminds me of what I loved about traditional LA punk. I definitely hear some early Black Flag and D.I. influence. Then I got to the third song, which is more loosely structured and really creepy, while still being really aggressive and engaging. It reminds me of some of the more art-oriented bands featured in the *Decline of Western Civilization*. The remainder of the album vacillates between these two styles. I definitely get a nostalgic feel from this record. Even the production gives me this vibe, especially in current times, when every record I hear sounds like it was recorded at the same studio. The layout and artwork look like these guys just don't give a fuck, but I mean this in a good way, as in "we don't give a fuck what you think!" The song lyrics are scrawled in between really odd and sometimes scary drawings of anguish, death, despair, and alienation in various forms. This is good... —Yemin (Know)

CLONE DEFECTS: *Blood on Jupiter: CD*

You can tell by the thunderous introductory Japanese drums (Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* sample?) that this album is going to change the status quo — not a mere pretty faux marble finish here, but an all out wrecking balls to the wall deconstruction of all present day conventions in rock'n'roll. The Clone Defects hail from the Detroit scene but enough of the waxing rhetoric on the regional proto-punk influences (everybody's pimply brother and gay dad has to cite the MC5 and The Stooges as their inspiration these days. Heck it's just damn good rock'n'roll for misfit punks, not some flowery review composed by some sweater wearing college boy with a vinyl fetish! So, in honor of my homosexual father, I will NOT compare the Clone Defects to the aforementioned bands, thank you.) Clone Defects have done much damage to many ears in the Midwest during the Horizontal Action Blackout shows, where they stole the show with singer Timmy Vulgar's drunken rock icon-in-the-making antics and the band's trademark disaster-core art punk. The title song throbbles one over to the other side of the room while this writer finds it as inspiring as speedtrap sex on the 134 over the hills of La Canada. There's a dire

urgency in the music along with a frayed and decayed moral sentiment from this band and it lends a perfect disenfranchised aura to an already fucked up world. If you're a fucked up fucker who's been fucked with, fucked, and fucked over, fuck this fucking shit and buy the album. You'll be heartened to find a band that translates all your frustrations into a solid CD full of that vitriol and seething anger encapsulated into a three minute punk rock song. Clone Defects also slow it down a bit so you can reflect on all the shit and piss that's been shat and pist on you by life. At times, it's reminiscent of the Gun Club, other times it's like a Hank Williams 78 played on 33, coming off bad speed. Besides, isn't that why we are punk rockers anyway? Enough of all the pretty punk shit going around — life sucks, I'm ugly, poor, uneducated and criminally insane, get me this album! P.S. Nods for the Berlin Brats cover. Killed By What? —Miss Namella J. Kim (Tom Perkins)

CODE, THE: *Alert Aware Involved: CD*

The differences between this band and bands I like are subtle. But where Anti-Flag is angry and wild, The Code are precise, and where The Foamers are reckless and fun, this quintet from X strike me as squeaky clean. If there is such a thing as being too on the nose, The Code are it. Not bad, but they're late for the party. Five years too late. —Money (A-F)

COMBAT WOUNDED VETERAN: *Duck Down for the Torso: CDEP*

It's as much feel — the tones of the instruments — as much as how they're played, flayed, and serrated. Only those with brave ears need apply. The first three songs plough out like an intergalactic meatloaf; they grind up big, thick slabs of sound, slather and stew it in a blood red sauce, choke it with pepper and sonic voodoo spices, and have it clog and chog in their colons for about a month. The music's all chunky, splattering, heavy, and intentionally irritating. It's hard artcore that ice skates through sludge — somehow remaining crisp in the morass. Fans of Kylesa, Tragedy, Men's Recovery Project, the movie *Brazil*, or a good old-fashioned ear-whoooping won't be disappointed. The fourth song, "Folded Space: Mapping Unexploded Ordinance," is a monologue by a robotic voice backed by dying seagull synthesizers — that I suspect is chock full of subliminal messages — about a mega battle (and eventual triumph) against giant squids, destructive floods, dying so many times that the narrator finds it tedious, and the power of a smile at the end of the day. As a post script, I finally figured out where they got their name. In Florida, they have license plates with Combat Wounded Veteran stamped into the metal. We can close the book on that mystery. —Todd (No Idea)

CONSUMERS, THE: *All My Friends Are Dead: CD*

Not much is readily known about this '77 Phoenix punk combo. There was a couple mentions about them in the July '78 issue of *Slash*. They relocated to LA and fell in with the Canterbury clique.

After that, who knows? Is this the same Paul Cutler who went on to 45 Grave? The music is great. There's definitely a UK influence, even in the vocals with their fake British accent. Hyper and jumpy with nervous rhythms. The guitar sounds scratchy and filthy, like he's scraping a tin can across the strings! —M.Avrq (In The Red)

CRIMSON SWEET:

So Electric: 7"

Quite the rockin' three piece from NYC that can stir up a fuzzy, sonic hum spinning round and round, but aren't afraid to be melodic at the same time. Dale like. Definitely a band I would catch live and from reading here, they have a few more things out to listen to. Right on. Take a spin with this one, dear Razorcakers, but keep both yer hands on the wheel. —Designated Dale (Slow Gold Zebra)

CROWD, THE: *Punk Off: CD*

You may already know the Crowd from the fucking genius *Beach Blvd* comp from way back when in 1979, (by the way, that comp might just be the best comp of all time!). Total southern California beach punks, straight from Huntington Beach! Catchy early eighties poppy punk with just the perfect tiny mix of early eighties hardcore. So, I know what you're thinking, "Sounds great, Maddy, but I'm SURE they totally stink NOW! What are they, dude, like eighty years old?" For the record, I firmly believe that the Sex Pistols reunion sucked. The Buzzcocks new LPs suck. If the Clash ever reunited, that would probably suck, too. But this, this is so damn good! This album doesn't sound at all like an old band trying to milk what they were doin' years ago! This sounds new! Great! Exciting! Full of energy, harmonies, punk rock, and a manic whirl of great surf-punk! The perfect album for a summer full of fun! If this were a cereal, it'd be Honey Nut Cheerios — it's been around for about the same amount of time as the Crowd, and it's still as good as ever — seriously! —Maddy (Unity Squad)

CRYPT KICKERS, THE:

Lamentations of the

Living Dead: CD

Putting the harm back in harmonica. Putting unmarked liquor in big jugs. Picture alcoholic zombies who can play better blind drunk who don't want to get off your porch at 4 AM and after punching your front lights out, asking why it's so dark, then burning their fingers from keeping their lighters flicked. Yeah, it's lo-fi, but perfectly so. What's captured is a clear polaroid snapshot of a wonderfully fucked up situation. Picture sea shanty pirates singing dirges in pickup trucks bouncing down a dusty Alabama road... and the passenger falls out, finds some instruments, and continues to play like it's the most natural thing — to play absolutely broken as easily as the blood gushing from his head. Excellent. —Todd (Nation of Kids)

CRYPT KICKERS/ THE PLAIN CLOTHES CREEP STRING TRIO/ THE PINE HALL HAINTS: *Tales from the Front Porch: split LP*

Three down-home, acoustic bands play songs of old with hearts a-new. The

Crypt Kickers: See their review adjacent to this one for the full report. More revved-up ghoulish good shit with titles like "Walkin', Talkin' Dead Man," "Grave Diggin' 101," and a cover of "Snoopy Vs. the Red Baron." The Pine Hall Haints: Utilize the spookiness of playing the saw, like a cartoon ghost, that fills the background. Solely snare drum, acoustic guitar, and voice accompany it. Makes one realize that the years before the proliferation of TV, that families would sit down with bits and pieces of instruments and play the hell out 'em in a way that was both ethereal and gritty. Real enjoyable. The Plain Clothes Creep String Trio: Banjo, washtub bass, and doleful lamentations. In the best way, they sound like three miscreants at a corner store playin' their hearts out just to release the pressure building up in their fingers and heads. It's hard not to slap the knee along with their tunes. Three-ways good. —Todd (Arkam's Black Owl)

C'NTS, THE:

Oh No It's the C'nts: CD

Man, the cover is beautiful: kid in dress and monster mask stands next to upright beaver. Inside, there's a mess of songs that make just about as much sense: "I Was Born in a Crack House," "I Live in a Tree," "I've Got Problems I Can't Explain," "I Can Run Like You," and so forth. It's sorta like if the Angry Samoans hadn't sucked so much when they started to suck. Anyway, it's always nice to hear a band that sounds like they're just having fun, rather than trying to be something that they're not. —Cuss Baxter (Disturbing)

CURBS, THE:

Fast Tracks to Oblivion: CD

Try as I may, all I can think of while this disc plays is "J-Church on speed." That is by no means a compliment. —Jimmy Alvarado (Brindart)

CURLUPANDDIE:

Unfortunately We're Not Robots: CD

I'm going to sum this up real quick by saying that this is like mixing Blood Hag with SOD having song titles like Dillinger 4. One song is broken into four tracks to emphasize each lyric. These fuckers are clever! Brutal metal and thrash that goes a long way for this reviewer. —Donofthedeat (Revelation)

CURSE, THE: demo: CD

Holy shit, this rules! These guys are from my city (Philadelphia) and I've watched them grow into a great band over the last six months. This demo is a great representation of their capabilities. If you like blazing melodic hardcore (NOT like the kind that Fat or Epitaph usually put out) then you will absolutely love this. The Curse's music contains elements of classic eighties hardcore, and some more mid-tempo (dare I say) streetpunk influences as well. The singer's voice sounds like he swallowed nails, while still retaining some melody throughout. The vocals come at you relentlessly, barely pausing for breath. There are even hints of a Hot Water Music vocal influence in one of the breakdowns. The musicianship is tight and dead on, and the recording is top-notch. This totally crushes my puny little **RAZORCAKE** [75]

head, but I keep listening to it over and over (and over) anyway. Also, the lyrics are super smart and deal with subjects like religious school indoctrination and fighting the 9 to 5 workday paralysis. Get this. —Yemin (the Curse)

CZOLGOSZ: self-titled: 7"

Here are five solid-but-sloppy, political punk songs that all sound like they'd fit perfectly in the old *MRR* hardcore comp, *Not So Quite on the Western Front*. And you can't beat a band named after a guy who shot the president of the United States. All hail Czolgosz! —Sean (Rodent Popsicle)

DAN MELCHIOR'S BROKE REVUE: Heavy Dirt: CD

Two guys from England and two from Florida live in New York and make joyful, sloppy garage blues with hints of thee Headcoats and the Country Teasers. Dan's voice and accent drool charm and there's no shortage of harmonica or slide guitar. I find myself repeatedly compelled to double-play the anthemic "Fashion," with its Zeppelinian and deadpan girl backups, but you'll undoubtedly find a favorite of your own. Unless you're stupid. You're not stupid, are you? —Cuss Baxter (In The Red)

DEFEATED, THE:

Asbury Cocksucker: 7"

Oh, man. This record is unreal. It's one of those rare recordings that stays with you days after you've listened to it, like an unfinished letter, a mirage swimming in the distance, the answer to a trivia question just below the surface of your

consciousness, until you find yourself back at the record player, dipping the needle into the grooves, filling the house with sound. I can honestly say this: it's like nothing I've ever heard before. Oh, man. —Money (S&M)

DEFNICS: Look at Me Mom I'm Not Dead: 7"

An old Killed By Death band gets back together to make some more racket. The title track is a decent slab of punk rock noise in that KBD style that refuses to die. The B-side, a live version of "51 Percent," is pretty damn snappy and not embarrassing in the slightest, which is a relief. —Jimmy Alvarado (Smog Veil)

DERITA SISTERS, THE: Whore Stories: CD

Fans of Dead Lazlo's Place or the Badtown Boys might be interested in this one. Gizz, a member of the latter bands, is in this one. This ensemble is more loose than the previous mentioned bands. Old school, in the vein of the early eighties. Silly lyrics over sloppy three chords of punk fun. Twenty songs to fill up some time when you need some messy pleasure. —Donofthead (Big Lizard)

DIESTO: self-titled: 7"

Think late-eighties AmRep noise rock and you're in the right ballpark. Pretty good. —Jimmy Alvarado (Elastic)

DILLINGER FOUR:

Situationist Comedy: CD

Holy shit! I cannot possibly write a review that would do justice to this album. The Dillinger Four have been

my favorite band for such a long time. The soundtrack and inspiration to so many crazy middle of the night bike rides, drunken porch sitting, zine writing, protesting, kissing, feeling depressed, feeling ecstatic... Whereas I havta sit in my room and listen to the Replacements or the Clash and dream of an era I know so little about, I have seen D4 dozens of times, singing along until I'm hoarse. If you don't run out and buy this album (possibly their best yet), you're gonna be kicking yourself like a teenager in 1976 NYC who never got around to checkin' out the Ramones. What can I say? If you can't feel passionately about the music you listen to, you're either a detached hipster asshole or need to listen to something else. I fucking love the Dillinger Four! If this were a cereal, it'd be Lucky Charms! —Maddy (Fat)

DILLINGER FOUR:

Situationist Comedy: CD

Wholly fuck! Fat has released a big can of whoop ass that is going to blow up the world. The mighty D4 has returned to create a rock opera of brimstone and fire that is beautiful to watch at the same time. Cutting and tasty (Hey, that's the *Razorcake* motto!) is what spews forth out for your audio pleasure. Every bit as good and to me even better than their classic *Midwestern Songs*... From start to finish, an accomplishment of aural perfection. Songs that take you up and down to the point of exhaustion. I am proclaiming this one of the best records of the year. If you don't know this band by now, go buy, borrow, tape, or steal one of their releases. If you don't like

them after that, you suck.

—Donofthead (Fat)

DUKES OF HAMBURG:

Some Folks: CD

Some pretty straightforward sixties covers courtesy of former Mummies drummer Russell Quan and some of his pals. The song selection is great, they are very well done, and the band's sound is authentic. What more could one ask for? Recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (Gearhead)

ENDS, THE: Jump Ship: 7"

Snot pop with sonic punk grease as the pie filling. Think Buzzcocks. Think Saints without the horns. Think of enjoying the fact that a twelve pack of Pabst is around five bucks. Think the Jam way before Style Council. Think of days when actual singing — instead of mumbling and outright screeching — wasn't seen as a sign of weakness and guitars didn't have to be perfect, yet sounded right, like they could shave all the hair off your body in a single swoop and give you a few goosebumps. Think that the best hooks are the ones you haven't heard before. Think balding drummer. Think that that makes me like them even more. Pretty cool debut. Look forward to more. —Todd (Mortville)

EPOXIES: self-titled: CD

As I was on my way out his door, this CD was handed over by our own Retodd who smiled and said, "Just listen... it's good." Now, Todd and myself usually have one thing in common when talkin' bands — if it's good, really damn



AMBI PETERSEN'S ARMÉ AVAILABLE IN JUNE! *Blod Ser Mere Virkeligt Ud På Film 7"* Second ep from Danish HC ragers. Sounds like the missing Dischord 7" from 1981 or lost Black Flag sessions from 1980 but in Danish! On tour in the US this summer. HC 7028

VITAMIN X Down the Drain Second full length. Fast intense Hardcore from Holland. The perfect mix between Straight Edge youth crew and fast-core thrash. Touring the USA this spring. LP HC1207 & CD HC5007

WOLFBRIGADE Progression/Regression Havoc brings you more savage Swedish Hardcore. Wolfbrigade (formerly known as Wolfpack) shred your ears with a total Scandinavian d-beat crustcore assault. Vinyl version is a Picture Disc! Split release w/ Farewell records of Germany. LP HC 1206 (PICTURE DISK) & HC 5006

CAUSTIC CHRIST S/T Two guys from Aus Rotten, 1 from React and 1 from Submachine combine to create a new hardcore powerhouse. Combining the stylings of early Corrosion of Conformity with faster Swedish hardcore resulting in a manic HC sound. HC 7028

RIISTETTY Tervetuola Kuolema One of the great Finnish hardcore bands of the 80s returns. No weak rehash here, full on hard driving Finnish style hardcore that put Tampere on the map! Licensed from Fight Records, remixed with a bonus track! HC 7027

IDENTITY PARADE: PHOTOGRAPHS BY KRISTOFER PASANEN, 1995-2000

150 Pages, Black & White, Hardcover Havoc records is proud to present our first effort at publishing. Kristofer Pasanen has compiled an amazing book of his live photographs of bands taken over the last five years. Hundreds of bands are photographed from Crust to SE to Emo; see the website for a complete list. HC-IDP [BOOK]

SKITSYSTEM Enkel Resa Till Rännstenen Second LP from the masters of dark Swedish hardcore. Heavy and brutal b-beat mixed with crusty HC and thrash styles. A pulverizing steamroller of Swedish hardcore. Split release with No Tolerance Records of Sweden. LP HC1205 & CD HC5005

NINE SHOCKS TERROR Zen and the Art of Beating Your Ass The "lost" LP re-issued. This is a totally remastered and remixed second release of the hard to get first LP which came out on Devour Records of Japan in 1999. An over the top wall of thrash. Brutal no-holds-barred sonic assault. This is the most powerful material by the most intense band in hardcore today. LP HC1204

MISERY The Early Years Incl. the Born, Fed, Slaughtered, Blindfold, and Children of War 7's, the Misery side of the split LP with SDS, and the Production Through Destruction LP. 71 Minutes of Amexib style apocalyptic crust. Split release with Crimes Against Humanity Records. CD HC5004

HOLDING ON Just Another Day LP / CD Crucial hardcore from Minnesota's Holding On! Mixes the crunch of Judge and Chain of Strength with the anger and raw power of Negative Approach. Totally pissed off, raw, powerful Hardcore! Split release with THD, Havoc and 1% records. LP HC1203 & CD HC5003

DS-13 Killed by the Kids One of the best bands in hardcore today. Amazing second LP of early 80s-style thrash/ HC/ punk. Excellent production, Pushead cover art. LP HC1202 & CD HC5002

VARIOUS ARTISTS When Hell Freezes Over Compilation LP Featuring Code 13, Misery, Dreadnaught, Onward To Mayhem, Arden Chapman, Segue, Feed the Machine, Scorned, Calloused, Fallen Graces, & Pontius Pilate. All new material by 11 Minneapolis punk/ HC bands. Styles vary from street punk, to crust, to grind, but it's all punk and all Minneapolis. Split release between Havoc, Sin Fronteras, and local bands. HC1201

CODE 13 Complete Discography 1994-2000 All the 7's and comp tracks with one unreleased song. HC 5001

ASSEMBLY OF GOD Submission Obedience Denial New band with members of Brother Inferior, Burnpile, and Subsantia. Fast punk/HC a lot like the later Brother Inferior material. HC7026

VITAMIN X People that Bleed Third 7" by this Dutch SEHC band. Fast HC sound similar to DS-13 or Life's Halt. Great political SE lyrics and high energy HC. HC7025

TEAR IT UP S/T Ex Dead Nation, killer fast hardcore with lots of drive and energy. HC7024

DS-13 / CODE 13 13 song split 7" Sweden and Minnesota united in fast, raw hardcore pride. HC7023

REAL ENEMY / HOLDING ON Twin Cities Hardcore split 7" Political straight edge and youth crew hardcore. HC7022.5

NINE SHOCKS TERROR Mobile Terror Unit 7" EP Awesome raw fast thrash from Cleveland. HC7022

KAOS Kukka Re-issue 1985 Finnish HC, classic stuff. HC7021

CLUSTERBOMBUNIT... and the Dirty Little Weapons 7" EP Brutal dis-core from Stuttgart, Germany. HC7020

UNITED SUPERVILLAINS (USV) Escapist 7" EP crucial fast HC similar to old Boston bands like DYS, Siege and SSD full speed ahead! HC7019

SPAIZ 151 S/T 7" EP Second 7" by this Texas HC powerhouse. Hardcore like Black Flag, Poison Idea or Battalion of Saints. HC7018

DEMON SYSTEM 13 Aborted Teen Generation 7" EP U.S. press of this amazing Swedish hardcore band, fast aggressive powerful old-school hardcore. HC7017

CODE-13 A Part Of America Died Today 7" EP Third and best EP from Minnesota thrash punk defenders of the faith—twelve songs. HC7016

TAMPERE SS Kuultu & Kuopattu 7" EP Demo and comp tracks from this crucial Finnish hardcore band of the early 80s. HC7015

TAMPERE SS SS Sotaa 7" EP More incredible Finnish thrash hardcore first released in '83. HC7014

NOTA/BROTHER INFERIOR split 7" Tulsa, Oklahoma's best hardcore old and new. HC7013

PROTESTI S/T 8 track EP Originally released as a demo in 1983, this is Finnish HC in the classic Propaganda Records style. HC7012

HEIST Pain Is Causing Life 7" EP Wicked fast and brutal HC in the infest tradition. Second EP by this Australian thrash outfit. HC7011

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MURDERERS S/T 7" EP Legendary chaos punk/ HC. Manic HC-punk like Disorder, much more thrash than their recent stuff. HC7009

CODE-13 They Made a Wasteland and Called it Peace Furious hardcore punk from beneath the streets of Minneapolis. HC 7008

H-100'S Texas Death Match 7" Snotty, harsh, early 80s hardcore with a seriously bad attitude. 3/4 of Nine Shocks Terror. HC 7007

MASSKONTROLL Warpath 7" EP Brutal Swedish-style hardcore similar to No Security, Doom, etc. ex-Resist, pre-Delestation. HC7006

CODE-13 Doomed Society 7" EP Blistering hardcore punk. Ex-Destroy but more of a punk/HC sound than full-on grind. HC7005

BRISTLE System 7" EP Rip roaring old school punk/HC from Seattle, powerful and catchy. HC7004

AUSROTTEN Fuck Nazi Sympathy 7" EP All-out punk attack similar to Varukers, Discharge, Conflict. HC7003

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE In a Few Hours of Madness 7" EP Diverse political punk, similar to Conflict at their peak. HC7002

DESTROY Burn this Racist System Down 7" EP Raging political hard-core in the vein of Doom, ENT, Disrupt. Our first release, from 1992. HC 7001

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good, we'll go out of our way to share and/or suggest bands to the point of irritating people (Me being the more irritating one, trust me). This CD from the Epoxies is what was missing in the record bins in the '80s. This is the new wave that should have been buzzing out of your parent's speakers during those house parties you threw while they were out of town. Really great songs played by a very competent lineup along with a synth player who is spot fucking on, unlike some of the throwaway Flock Of Hairdo bands that came and went some twenty years ago. I hear hints of The Rezillos ("Stop Looking at Me"), X ("We're So Small," "Bathroom Stall"), and let me tell ya, it's all done quite well. I think Roxy Epoxy could very well sit in for Chrissie Hynde if Chrissie ever needed a stand-in for one of her Pretenders gigs. I have the feeling the next time the Epoxies are in LA, I'm going to be flailing spastically ala Jim Decker of The Crowd (who would be a good band to bill the Epoxies with). And you silly geese thought that Seattle only shits out Starbucks all over the country. Well, guess again, fucko — here come the Epoxies. —Designated Dale (Dirtnap)

EPOXIES: self-titled: CD

The New New Wave is here you smacked asses and the Epoxies are at the front of the pack. How is it Seattle, Dirtnap in particular, keeps pressing records that fill huge voids we didn't even know existed until we find ourselves spinning the disc for the dozenth time in a row? Somewhere between X-Ray Spex and Pat Benatar, the Epoxies have made a record with one foot in 1981 and another in this not-so-new millennium. The songs get up and go with snappy drums and bass lines, rocking guitars and a healthy infusion of spirited keyboards. (Their website even features a photo of a rare species of guitar known the keytar...) But what stands out is the songwriting. Singer Roxy Epoxy holds nothing back, no territory is deemed too private, no fear too painful to be explored. It's courageous without crossing over into mawkishness or melodrama. Part of the appeal is nostalgic. The Epoxies have a weird cold war vibe that seems right at home in these paranoid times. Songs like "We're So Small" and "Losing Control" feel like cold war anthems of the heart. This is a record about the next cataclysm — be it personal or global, public or private — that we can do nothing to stop. Post 9/11 love songs for your timid, tortured hearts. —Money (Dirtnap)

FANTOMAS MELVINS BIG BAND:

Millennium Monsterwork: CD
State-specific tuneage that is the musical equivalent of a non sequitur. I wouldn't try listening to this without drugs. If you have neighbors who suspect you do nasty, dangerous things in your abode late at night, you might want to pass on this. If you have a boyfriend or girlfriend you want out of your life and is slow on the uptake, put this in and select "repeat." —Money (Ipecac)

FEEDERZ, THE: *Ever Feel Like Killing Your Boss*: CD

Anger can be an amazing source for inspiration. This is classic, long hard-to-

find, caustic, dark shit that would do you well to pick up. Spearheaded by the acid-spitting Frank Discussion, The Feederz never took any sides — left or right, right or wrong — except their own. Yet they were super-intelligent and graphically smart about pulling off this musical coup. You'd think that something so nihilistic would immediately implode on itself. Luckily, they recorded a couple albums before that happened (although they're playing out again). The songs themselves are fantastic and it's almost impossible to trace how many bands have shamelessly borrowed from The Feederz without giving credit where credit's due — from the outright intelligent antagonism (rarely duplicated), the guitar strangulation, the absolutely amazing drumming that sets a definite mood and pace, the ability to play a slower song that's completely frenetic and dizzy, how to make truly moving protest-against-everything music, and the flow of the entire album itself. The Feederz were many things, but they had several recurring themes: anti-capitalism, anti-advertising, anti-submission, and anti-religion. Indispensable jewels are songs like "1984," which rails against working so someone else can make a buck off of you. ("You go to school for twelve years where you learn just one thing/ How not to mind being bossed.") In every fold of the CD jacket, Frank suggests you steal this album, to use their artwork, to tape the songs at home. Juxtaposing the CD cover subvertisement of an attractive, busty bandita is the talk bubble, "Vandalism, beautiful as a rock in a cop's face." Leaving no big stone unturned and walking away from no fights, they go right for the robe. In "Jesus," re-named from the original LP's "Entering from the Rear" — leaves little room for interpretation. ("Jesus entering from the rear/ Fucking you in the ass/ Just another faggot/ In just another mass.") I've always found it more than a little weird that The Feederz didn't get as popular as, say, Dead Kennedys. Perhaps it's because they fought with their gloves off and they constantly attacked for exposed, hypocritical throats. Perhaps it was because this album was fucking tough to find for years. The original LP version of *Ever Feel...* ("Pay no more than \$0.00 for this record") had sandpaper on both sides of the jacket, designed to scuff the records next to it, as a fuck you to record collectors (which backfired, because it's worth a lot of dough.) All said and done, this is an extremely welcome re-issue that I'll be playing incessantly. The irony that this is quite possibly more timely than when it was first released doesn't escape me either. —Todd (Broken)

FEEDERZ, THE:

Teachers in Space: CD

With a picture of the space shuttle Challenger blowing up, the title doesn't sound as nicey nice. While not as tickling my punk fancy as their first record, there are more harmonies, less thud, and opens with a Crass-y spoken word over tortured instruments song that isn't as essential. In other words, a bit more arty, but upon repeated listens, it's growing on me. It makes me realize how truly funny, diverse, and inventive The Feederz could be away from hard-

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core. The song titled "Intermission (Time for a Snack)" is just that. Mellow vibes and a ticking clock for a minute and five seconds. Half of "Taking the Night" sounds like a musical. A really good musical that I'd like. About rioting. So, if you see both this and *Ever Feel...*, get the other, but if you have a choice between this and, say, an emo record, this'll do your head good. As an added bonus, this also has a long live show video on it (which can't be played on record players). —Todd (Broken)

FLESHIES:

The Game of Futbol: CDEP

Like the Butthole Surfers in their prime, you want Fleshies to fuck with you. It's fun to hear them molest your eardrums, and this EP kind of feels like kneeling down before a priest who kicks you square in the forehead with soccer cleats. Then you realize why he's wearing those shoes. So he doesn't trip in your blood while he dances around, making fun of you. This EP should come with the instructions: "Steal a can of Scotch Guard. Spray into plastic bag. Huff until the bag's stuck around skull in tight seal. Shit yourself. Go blind." My favorite songs are the first and third. "Fists of Mercy" and "The Tickler" show you that they've got the chops to write perfect punk songs. The other four scream that they don't give a fuck about my or your expectations. These songs destroy in different ways, from the loungey, ether-happy, four-minute, twelve-second long title song to the "Sexiest Man Alive," sung in a metal, nut-squishing falsetto that begins with bleating sheep. Gotta appreciate bands with gonads this big who're crazy

enough to pull it off like it's the most natural thing in the world. Recommended. —Todd (Adeline)

FREE VERSE:

Mierda/Aerosol: CDEP

Two songs to get a feeling for this three-piece, all-girl band from Seattle. Don't be scared; these girls have chops. Remember, before goth, there was death rock. That is what these ears hear mixed with some metal overtones to put the umph into their attack. It's also a little loose and raunchy, which make this listener appreciate this more. I'm enthusiastic to hear what else comes from these women. —Donofthead (Free Style)

FREE VERSE:

Mierda/Aerosol: CDEP

"Mierda," for some reason, reminded me of Vice Squad's "Freedom Begins at Home." The second track was a noisy punk tune, with lotsa time signature changes. Not the best thing I've heard all week, but I ain't exactly complaining, either. —Jimmy Alvarado (Free Style, no address)

GBH: City Baby's Revenge: CD

Some records are really hard to listen to, not because of how good or bad they are, but rather because of what they evoke. This one is just such a record. I have so many memories tied up around this band and this album, from assorted fights to assorted drunken parties to being drunk and fighting at assorted gigs. It seems like it was last year or something when this was originally released and it's actually been nineteen years. Nineteen fucking



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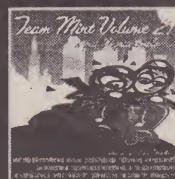
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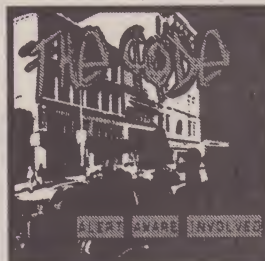
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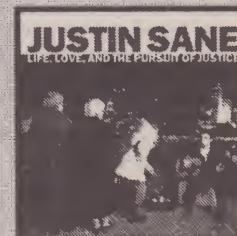
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years. That is an absolutely mind-boggling concept, one my mind almost has trouble grasping. Yeah, it's still a damn fine album. Yeah, the lyrics are still okay at best and the folks at Captain Oi were kind enough to include the "Give Me Fire," "Catch 23," and "Do What You Do" 45s on this. Yeah, I highly recommend it to those not familiar with the band Mykel Board once called "Great Big Hug" (a name that rolls outta my mouth in giggles every time someone mentions 'em) although I will do so only after I tell them to pick up the *Leather, Bristles...* and *City Baby Attacked by Rats* albums first. But good GOD, has it been a long time! I usually try hard not to get all nostalgic for the "old days" or anything, but I'm listening to "Drugs Party in 526" right now and I just can't seem to help myself. Don't know about you all, but I'm gonna buy me a 40 of OE, put this puppy on LOUD and remember a time when buying a GBH shirt at the local mall was a completely alien concept. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

GBH: *Midnight Madness and Beyond*: CD

This is the album where GBH and I parted company. There are some mighty fine songs on here. The songs that didn't seem so hot so long ago are actually not so bad after all and the sound that made them huge can still be found in there somewhere, but the metal that was always bubbling under the surface began to become more prevalent and that, kiddies, made all the difference. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

GC5, THE: *Never Bet the Devil Your Head*: CD

Just when I thought everything had been said and done with street punk and the genre was starting to play itself out, along came this new GC5 album to destroy all my preconceptions. I've been trying to figure out what sets the GC5 apart from all the street punk bands that came and went within a year or two of that first Dropkick Murphys album. I scratched my head over this as I listened to this album again and again. Finally, I realized that it's not one thing that sets this album apart. It's everything. It's the fact that they owe as much to the Workin' Stiffs as they owe to Cocksparrer. It's the new energy and anxiousness they bring to their songs. It's their ability to stick a slow, acoustic song in the middle of the album without killing the flow of the album and without coming off as a second rate bar band. It's the way they can sneak outlaw-country-style lyrics reminiscent of Waylon Jennings or Kris Kristofferson (yeah, Kristofferson's a weenie of an actor, but he was a great songwriter) into their songs, like this one: "I got my education in the ivory halls/ Found the pulse of the nation on truck-stop toilet stalls." It's the way they completely rip off the Swingin' Utters in one song, yet somehow get away with it. It's little bits and pieces, and the way they all fit together. I got their first album, *Kisses from Hanoi*, a couple of years ago and have listened to it consistently since then. I was hoping their follow up album would be as good, and *Never Bet the Devil Your Head* definitely holds up against their debut. The lyrics are less political on the new album, but there's

still a lot of great lines. And the wanking guitar solos from the first album have been replaced by more solidly constructed songs. It's a fucking awesome album. —Sean (Thick)

GEZA X AND THE MOMMY-MEN: *You Goddam Kids!*: CD

The sole solo recorded output from this former Deadbeat and famous producer, this long out of print gem finally resurfaces. For those who are either too young or too burned out to remember what this sounds like, imagine *Are We Not Men?*-era Devo trying to stretch out and get weird and jazzy, and then add a marimba. Believe me, it sounds better than that description. The music doesn't sound dated at all and, in addition to "classic" tracks like "Isotope Soap" and "We Need More Power," you get a couple of bonus tracks. Big thumbs up here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dionysus)

GRABASS CHARLESTONS/ BILLY REESE PETERS: *Split* CD

Fuck yeah. During this rotation of CD reviews, I thought to myself, "Am I being too harsh? Am I becoming a flapping cockhole critic who can't hear good in front of him? Why am I not liking a lot of bands I've never heard of?" That ends here. Both of these bands are great, and for reasons I can't explain, the Grabass Charlestons win by a nose. (There are overlapping band members between the two bands and it gets confusing who hootenannies from one band to the other, even after it was explained to me that Will Beltone drums and sings on the first seven songs. The fact that the entire album repeats itself confuses my simple brain even more. But after a lot of deliberation, you know what? It doesn't matter.) It's prototypical (not to be confused with predictable) Gainesville punk — and what that means to you is that they've got an inherent love (either subliminally or explicitly) of Leatherface. They fit right into the pantheon/fireside ruckus of Panthro UK United 13, Radon, Dillinger Four and The Beltones. The music zings and crashes around like a drunk, sloppy, happy gang of friends that stomp on fires holding uncapped gas cans above their heads. Happy, strong combustion, pure and simple. It's made by people who could give a fuck about being fashionable and can pull off Cheap Trick's "Hello There" like they wrote it themselves. Take, for instance, what I pose is our generation's "Pinball Wizard." (Join along in this exaltation if you consider your generation having nothing to do with mall mentalities, music on the radio, moving units or Soundscan, just the love of loud, raw, fun music that ain't afraid of thinking as much as drinking.) "Galaga Wizard" has got all this boy needs to fuel his brain and make him hoarse from shouting along. It follows a protagonist being picked up in a limousine full of dignitaries and "neon girls, minor legions with cocaine pearls," pissed that he's called an amateur, then locks into the world of the game itself, as "them falling bees is looking fucking scary," ending, no less, with "it's some sacred shit to be spreading 'round." It's cool because it's about playing a video game, but works on so many different levels, like meeting expectations, forever tagged as the

underdog and not only being ready to prove yourself at any time, but succeeding in the world you've created. That hits so close to home, it's not even funny. I can't think of a higher recommendation for this CD. —Todd (No Idea)

GREG MACPHERSON

BAND: *Good Times*

Coming Back Again: CD

I don't understand why I got this, or why they sent it to this magazine. The punkiest thing about it is that one track has about fifteen seconds of Breeders-reminiscent intro, and the Breeders descended from the Pixies, and some punks like both of those bands (myself included). But fifteen seconds in the midst of twelve whole songs of Chris Isaakan altpop don't mean shit to me. If this was some sort of cruel prank, I'm gonna jam a Twinkie in someone's eye. —Cuss Baxter (G7)

HEMI CUDÁ:

Classics for Lovers: CD

Surprise! I love it when my intuition is wrong. I thought this was going to suck hard! I hesitantly put the disc into the player, ready to dismiss it. Pouring out of the speakers was a blast of raw punk'n'roll mixed with a strong flavor of pop melody. Kinda sweet and dirty at the same time. Songs that barely cross over the three minute mark keep things interesting. They would probably be a band that is great in a live setting. Great songs that have them sounding like a cross between early Redd Kross and The Waitresses or Josie Cotton. Looking at the insert, I see pictures of the band. Out front are two women with matching outfits and wigs playing guitar and bass and trading off on the vocal duties. I read that the drummer is male, but no pictures are to be found. I guess the label didn't think he was marketable for his sex appeal. —Donofthedeat (Pop Sweatshop)

HOLLYWOOD HATE: *self-titled*: CD

It's here. It's finally fucking here. The first Hollywood Hate full length that's ready to be rammed down your throat like an oversexed face hugger from *Aliens* and rip you apart from the inside out. I can't say how much you need to hear this first disc from what I hope, there will be lots more from one of LA's finest outfits right this moment. If you have had the fortunate pleasure of catching the Hate live, then you know it's all gold, here, baby. Punk that's not afraid to rock without makin' itself look like an asshole. The good stuff. Tooth-chippin' music. I can almost picture myself ramming your too-hot-for-words Mom as I listen to songs like "Peacemaker," "Slow Ride," and "Kickboy." If you don't believe a syllable I'm spraying outta my loud mouth, just grab a listen to what they laid down in the studio here on the CD. Now, if yer a Doubting Thomas, cheap-ass mother-fuck, you can also access a coupla tunes on their site, but don't just be a song-sampling yutz. Experience the full-fledged fuck-upping that is Hollywood Hate. You can thank me later when I'm done with yer MILF of a Mom. —Designated Dale (www.hollywoodhate.com)

HOT HOT HEAT:

Knock Knock Knock: CD

This really sucks sucks sucks. —Money (SubPop)

HOT POCKETS:

Kiss 'n Run: LP

Yay! How could I NOT like this? It's got a guy from the Spaceshits (one of the best garage bands of all time, easily), and they cover a Beat song ("Walking out on Love") AND a Beach Boys song ("Girl Don't Tell Me")! And both of the covers rule! Total lo-fi garage and sloppy! Just the way I like it! A slight Devil Dogs influence on some of this stuff, and a total early nineties garage influence (think: Devil Dogs, Teenegenerate, Supercharger....aaaaahhh...). One bad song, but what can you do? If this were a cereal, it'd be Cinnamon Toast Crunch. Gimme more, more, more! —Maddy (Alien Snatch)

HOT SNAKES:

Suicide Invoice: CD

First, the rant. Although I understand the music industry wants to give reviewers music before it hits the shelves to build excitement and that artwork often doesn't get finished until the last minute, but I can't help but feel like a chump when I get a piece of music in a clear plastic baggie solely with the album name, song titles, and street date instead of the full package. (This also coming from ex-members of Drive Like Jehu who silkscreened on their CD, "CD's really fuckin' blow." Why do CDs blow? One reason — shittier, smaller artwork. But versus no artwork at all...? I digress.) It'd be like me sending out magazines "for preview" with a bunch of pages missing and without a cover. That shit just ain't right. It'd be another thing if I wasn't even a fan of music and I worked for *Spin*; if this was just my job that I hated, then just rewriting the press kit. I like the Hot Snakes, so it just bums me out that I don't even know what the album looks like. Plus, without a package, I tend to lose all the skinny CDs in my piles. Now the review. This is the mellower, more rock'n'roll side to their debut, *Permanent Midnight*. The structures are tighter and more traditional, there are less sproinging angularities and meticulous breakaparts which smear into blasts and whippers. It's all more straight ahead — well, as straight ahead as you're apt to get from the twisty music from present and ex-members of Mule, Pitchfork, Rocket From The Crypt, and Tanner. It's like with the first album, they were charting music as complicated as a heart — veins, arteries, and jumping, jittering parts — and *Suicide Invoice* is a large leg muscle being operated under ether with big, spotted tools. It's creepier and more sparse overall and you can see how the all parts operate and help one another. The diagram's simpler, the lighting's steadier, but the result is pretty much the same. A kickass, non-traditional rock'n'roll album by a bunch of veterans who know how to *not* sound like a supergroup. (Name a single supergroup that was better than groups the members were famous from. Two points off if you even thought of Damn Yankees or the Traveling Wilburys.) —Todd (Swami)

RECENT RELEASES...



GOGOGO AIRHEART "Exitheuxa"

Revered for their bravehearted dub-heavy postpunk, GOGOGO AIRHEART venture well beyond this easy pigeonhole.



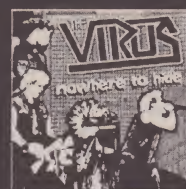
DEAD SHERIFF "Rockapocalyptica"

The Scandinavian heir to TURBONEGRO. If you like HARD ROCK...along with the fury of aggressive punk rock, you're gonna love DEAD SHERIFF!



A GLOBAL THREAT "Here We Are"

Once again proving their place at the top of the American street punk heap, along with the THE CASUALTIES, THE UNSEEN, & THE VIRUS.



THE VIRUS "Nowhere To Hide"

THE VIRUS return with 12 brand new studio tracks and continue their domination of the street punk world as we know it.



THE BELTONES "Cheap Trinkets"

Their first full length album! This gritty mixture of '50s rock-a-billy, '60s mod rock and '70s punk has won them fans around the globe.



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THE CRIPPLES "Dirty Head"

Seattle band THE CRIPPLES are on the Screamers side of the galaxy. Imagine if ADD N TO [X] played pop songs.



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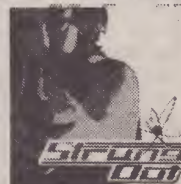
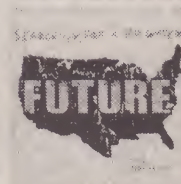
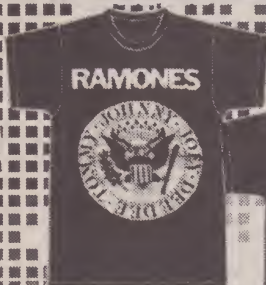
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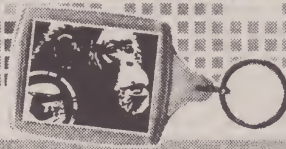
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IRONBOSS: *Rides Again*: CD
These are the things I think about when I hear this band. The movie *Easy Rider*, Coors beer, hot rods and seventies southern fried rock. —Donofthedeath (Reptilian)

JEWWS, THE: *L'explosion du Son de Maintenant*: LP

As soon as the needle touches the LP, there's this vibrating shimmy. The Jewws have the immaculate ability to sound instantly recognizable without sloppily ripping off their influences (from Man or Astroman? to Chuck Berry), and are one of the few garage bands around right now that are naturals, who don't sound like they were specifically produced to be lo-fi. Dynamically impressive, this is great for a bunch of different occasions. Lower, it's great mood music, cranked up really high, it's pretty much guaranteed to get you laid. Excellent. —Todd (Demolition Derby)

JFA / THE WORTHLESS / BLUE COLLAR SPECIAL: *Concrete Waves*: split CD

The JFA songs were so miserable that I just couldn't bring myself to even acknowledge the tracks by the Worthless and Blue Collar Special. It's very traumatizing when a band you have effectively worshipped for nigh on twenty years suddenly sucks this bad. Don't think I'm gonna be able to sleep tonight. —Jimmy Alvarado (Disaster)

JFA / THE WORTHLESS / BLUE COLLAR SPECIAL: *Concrete Waves*: split CD

During the early to mid-'80s, my cousin Scott was a dare-devilish semi-pro skater who chaotically careened across many a plywood flux ramp in backyards and skateparks throughout the entire nation. I'd often accompany him to the local flux, which was situated right smackdab in the middle of a loblolly wilderness several miles outside of town. There in the heavy and humid summer heat, Scott would perform some of the most amazing aerial acrobatics on his splintered and chipped skateboard, occasionally bailing and hittin' the bottom of the ramp full-force and body-first. I distinctly remember a well-worn, multi-stickered old jambox was always blaring the latest and liveliest California skatepunk cacophony, which provided the ultimate energy-enhanced soundtrack for an endless afternoon of spectacular death-defying skateboard feats. Yep, what ya have here is exactly the same kind of teeth-gnashing "old school" skatepunk bombast that inspired a sweat-drenched legion of diehard ollie-grindin' enthusiasts to grab their boards and giddily hit the ramps a-runnin' during the culturally retarded Reagan era. JFA (one of the indelibly inspirational originators of the skatepunk genre) and The Worthless and Blue Collar Special (two youthfully exuberant newer groups who passionately carry the skatepunk torch in the most frenzied of fashion!); three bands, three-million decibels of all-out raging fury, and fifteen bone-shattering songs about skating and being a social outcast in today's fast-food, quick-service, throw-away society. What a raucously cool combination! —Roger Moser, Jr. (Disaster)

JOHN WILKES BOOZE: *self-titled*: 7"

This outfit rocks and rolls southern style while wielding a white-hot poker, swinging at your head punker style with the rasping and ripping "Whiskey and Pills" and cooling out on the flip with a tune called "Marc Bolan Makes Me Want to Fuck," complete with slide guitar. I can totally see these guys raging onstage with Throw Rag or even Tom Waits. Like to see a full length from JWB, hell yeah! Even the name of the band kicks ass! —Designated Dale (Family Vineyard)

JOLT, THE: *self-titled*: CD

Prime-grade English mod-punk from way back when that'll whet the appetite of both the average Jam fan and the average punker with a jones for something good that predates Ronald Reagan's presidency. Included in the deal are extra tracks from assorted singles/EPs and a great cover of "Whatcha Gonna Do About It?" Pretty up there on the recommendation list. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

KOOPAS, THE: *When Opposites Attack*: 7"

A six layer log of smelly EMOTional songs that smacks of trying (yes, trying) to lift late '70's-era guitar riffs of the Ramones. I fucking pray that Joey and Dee Dee haunt your ass for this abomination. —Designated Dale (www.thekoopas.com)

KUNG FU KILLERS: *Burning Bush*: 7"

Wha?!? Sounds a lot like the Adolescents "blue album" era. Bullshit, you say? Well, check the vocal delivery, guitar work, and how the music has that cruising feel. Now, are you convinced? My only gripe is this is two songs. Don't hold out on us here! —M.Avr (TKO)

KUNG FU KILLERS: *Game of Death*: CDEP

Okay, so the kung fu thing was getting tired five years ago and it doesn't need to be brought back here, but this is a great little record. "Wasting Time" has me pining for the full-length. Also features a nice rendition of The Misfits "I Turned into a Martian" and a blistering cover of Black Flag's "Room 13." Rumor has it the members of KFK really are martial arts fanatics and are former hardcore heads from back in the day, but prefer to keep their identity a secret. I can't figure out who they are, but I suspect "KFK Theme" holds the key... —Money (TKO)

LAB RATS, THE: *Start Thinking*: CD

Since this band is based up in the bay area, I would picture them perfectly at a Gilman Street show. These guys blew me away! I get goose bumps when I hear elements of Nardcore meets late eighties fastcore. Intensity that doesn't waver. The speed without going into a blur. Punk rock that has the snottiness, speed, and musicianship that pulls it all together. They definitely kept my attention. I felt like I was back at the Cathay

the pinnacle of hundreds of years of human evolution!



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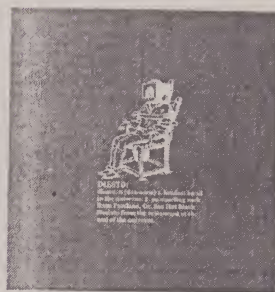
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de Grande. If you don't know about the Cathay, it was my Gilman back in the early-to-mid eighties in Hollywood. With the name they have chosen, I swear I was going to get to listen to some mediocre melodicore band. Loved to be proven wrong. I am a fan! —Donofthedeath (New Disorder)

LO-LITE: *Sidekicks*: CD

Dirty sounding hipster blues somewhere between Pussy Galore and Jon Spencer Blues Explosion. The blues influence dominates the sound, which is a good thing. Better than most bands who do this stuff. —M.Avr (Slovenly)

MANIFESTO JUKEBOX:

Remedy: CD

I hate to sound redundant and clichéd, but the first word that comes to mind when listening to Manifesto Jukebox is *intense* (as defined by Webster: "Having or exhibiting a distinctive feature to an extreme degree" and also "Deeply felt; profound."). Manifesto Jukebox's distinctive feature is their aural rage that's passionate, precise, and, yes, profound. It's most definitely pure punkrock kineticism in attitude, emotion, and delivery (but thankfully without all of the stylish and predictable bullshit antics that routinely permeate the punkrock airwaves today!). With this endearing CD, my ears are appreciatively basking in an arousing assortment of sound that's riveting, original, and uplifting. Gravelly, anger-tinged vocals, jangly and urgent distortion-heavy guitars, power-surge undercurrents of bass-thumping splendor, and sporadic deafening bursts of volcanic percussion all

intricately intermingling into one immense explosion of unstoppable energy (think Husker Du, Leatherface, and an entire regiment of Molotov cocktail-tossing seditionists). I swear to you, this is one of the most life-altering auditory experiences I've ever endured. So rise-up and meet the Manifesto Jukebox challenge as soon as humanly possible. Your ears will be eternally grateful! —Roger Moser, Jr. (BYO)

MANIFESTO JUKEBOX:

Remedy: CD

People mention Husker Du and Leatherface when bringing up Manifesto Jukebox. I'd huck in a spot of Jawbox. Someone even name dropped, *Mush*, Leatherface's masterpiece. Fellow *Razorcake* creator, Sean, walked in when I was giving this one of many listens and without making a joke, asked, "Is this Hot Water Music?" Hmmm. Maybe me ears aren't hearing things right. Yeah, the vocalist sounds like he's sandpapered on vinyl. The guitars can glisten and slice, but the tempos all seem to be in the same range. All the songs fold into one another without a whole bunch of distinction. Sure, it's well played and they do a decent job of sounding desperate and taking a couple twists and turns, but it just doesn't grab me, shake me, make me want to sing along, or make me want drink gasoline from a bottle or lend a closer ear. To me, it's the difference between sterility and organic explosion. Manifesto Jukebox seem to be playing inside the craters that previous, better bands — bands that I've listened to and enjoyed for years on end — have cleared out. To check my

ears' calibration, I listened to this ten times over two weeks, steeled my nerves, scrunched my face, and listened to *Remedy* from tip to tail. Nope. Didn't stick. —Todd (BYO)

MASTER CONTROL:

self-titled: CD

A self-described "combination of old-school hip hop aesthetic, classic rock (which I personally hear zilch of, thankfully), and new wave blended with the methods of modern electronic production." What that translates to is bass drum-driven new wave that would be thoroughly boring were it not for the use of robot voices throughout the entire disc. Don't quite get the whole "fall of American culture" stuff, but the robot voices sure are cool. I'm a total sucker for robot voices. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.hsarecords.com)

MDC:

Now More than Ever: CD

A greatest hits package that spans from 1980-2000. Once formerly the Stains based out of Texas, they changed their name when they found out there was a band with the same name in East LA. When they (with name changed) and DRI moved to SF, they became one of the bands of the scene that broke out throughout the world. They were at the forefront in the early eighties with their politically charged lyrics and brash hardcore attack. Their first album, *Millions of Dead Cops*, and the EP, *Multi Death Corporations*, was a must have at the time. I still pull those records out to this day. It's nice to hear many of the same songs here without the cracks

and pops. My copies are pretty worn from being played so much. It was probably hard to compile all these songs because everybody has their favorites. I appreciate the effort and I think this is a good listen. Go buy this before you waste your money on Ebay on the originals. —Donofthedeath (Beer City)

MDC:

Now More Than Ever: CD

The title says it all. In a time when self-appointed messenger from God, John Ashcroft wants to rip our civil liberties to shreds, Dick Cheney keeps trying to pad his bank account with the spoils of Alaska, and Tom Ridge's color-coded homeland security system tells us if it's orange we're totally fucked, we need MDC. Beer City presents thirty-one hardcore anarcho-protest songs from the dark days of the evil empire that spawned the New New World Order. Think of it as a hardcore time capsule from the '80s. But it's not all "smash the state" and "kill the cop in yourself," songs like "Deep in the Heart," "Skinhead" and "Nazis Shouldn't Drive" demonstrate a sense of humor that MDC's contemporaries couldn't match, paving the way for bands like NOFX and Anti-Flag. MDC is one of the few politically aware bands that insist you take them seriously and reward those who do with passion, intelligence, and humor. —Money (Beer City)

MELVINS, THE:

Hostile Ambient Takeover: CD
Jeezusss!! The fuggin' Melvins are a bomb in the subway. Total sonic

DIVISION OF LAURALEE



'Black City' is a tremendous album. Its 12 tightly-wound, retro-punk tracks mix the brooding sensuality of Girls Against Boys with the dark atmospherics of Joy Division and the hip-shaking drive of latter-day Primal Scream. Throw in cool lyrics like "I'm not your toy for penetration" and smartly subversive titles such as 'The Truth Is F**ked' and 'We've Been Planning This For Years', and - to borrow a phrase from The Hives - DOLL could well prove to be your new favourite band.

KERRANG (K K K K)

 **BURNING**
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destruction, ear splitting guitars and drums to turn your brain to mush. The best thing they've done lately, and obliterates all the bands trying to stand in their shadow. My year-old son can't get enough of this disc. The future looks bright. —M.Avg (Ipecac)

MILES BETWEEN US:
self-titled: 7"

Hardcore, straight edge style. It even says so on the disc label. Straight edge... don't you need a straight edge to chop and line up healthy gagers of cocaine and/or speed? Hmm, I suppose not in this case. I'm guessing it means the X's-on-your-hands, singers-pointing-to-the-sky-while-singing kind of straight edge. How silly of me to think of honkers initially. And I hope that those are tofu burgers sizzling on the barbecue grill as pictured on the other side of this disc label, because if they ain't, some pissed-off bovines are gonna come down and violently mule-kick all your doors in until they find the offending parties... straight edge... good GAWD... —Designated Dale (Blatherskyte)

MISS, THE: No Radio: CD

Noisy rock band mines the gray area between 100 Flowers and Jesus Lizard. Results aren't too bad. —Jimmy Alvarado (Morphius)

MONEEN: The Theory of Harmonial Value: CD

So, the other day I was riding my bike and my thoughts turned to the whole post-whatever, indie emo invasion. And I was thinking about how, yes, it is hor-

rible, but HAS to end soon. And then I get CDs like this for review and I realize how 'overly optimistic I was being! Moneen sounds like every other band that sounds like post-indie, post-punk, emo college rock hell. Allow me to quote from the lyric sheet, "Awake, a dream of fate I cannot escape, now it's too late. Time dies in straight lines." I could go on. I refuse to waste anymore of my time describing this crap. (Please, Todd and Sean, have pity on me!) If this were a cereal, it'd be stale Special K. A grown-up cereal we can all agree to hate! —Maddy (Smallman)

MOO-RAT FINGERS, THE:

Actung Duschbag: 7"

Two versions each of two '77-style scorchers. I don't know what they're about. I wonder why they didn't just put four different songs on here but maybe they could only write two songs and with a name like Moo-Rat Fingers maybe they're only seven years old and anyway it would work good in a jukebox because both songs rock and it wouldn't matter if you accidentally played the wrong side or it would be good for a blind person, too. —Cuss Baxter (Big Neck)

MU330: Live... Oh Yeah!: CD

If you loves these guys and they never have come to your town, take a couple of hits of LSD and put this disc on. It will make you feel like you are there. Enjoy! "I have never heard of them," you say? Real quick answer, a group of guys who seem to have fun and who play ska. —Donofthead (Asian Man)

MUSIC/NINJA: 8-song EP: 7"

Although I'm not convinced that the band themselves know if they should go for the minimalism and angularity of Wire ("My TV"), the stark moodiness of Joy Division ("Donny Donny"), or straight-ahead lo-fi, primarily atonal, Flipper-ish punk blasts ("A Cop, a Clown, and a Handgun" and "The Record Player and Me"), I'll give them this — everything about them sounds icy, cold, and brittle. Too arty to be robots, they go well out of their way mute all harmonies and hooks. Just as I wouldn't like watching a flash-frozen dog thrown out of a skyscraper every day, on occasion it's interesting to see music shard, crash, and chunk apart instead of merely falling down, bouncing a couple times, and becoming completely pulverized. Definitely not for everyone. Hell, definitely not for me most of the time, but interesting nonetheless. —Todd (Strandad Sjobuse)

NIXON NOW: U.C.P.: 7"

Sloppy punk and roll on the A side with "U.C.P." and a B side that sounded like the record skipping until I realized that it was the "song" titled "In a Loop." Nixon Now is a cool name for a band, though, just as long as there's plenty of thick, curvaceous go-go dancers to perform with them. Shimmy, baby, shimmy! —Designated Dale (Fanboy)

NO ALTERNATIVE:

Now or Never: CD

I thought this was a repress or bootleg of San Francisco's No Alternative circa (I think) 1979. I open this up and see a picture of three kids representing the

band. What the fuck! Don't kids nowadays ever check to see if a band name has been used before? Shame on them! Has trying to be original just too hard? I guess so since the music is average melodicore. As punk as you get if you take the punk elements of Sum 41 mixed with Bracket. —Donofthead (Static)

NO USE FOR A NAME:

Hard Rock Bottom: CD

These guys have grown past me. I know that the better you get as an musician, the songs need to be more challenging. I seem to like it the first listen through, but quickly get bored afterwards. It's real pleasing to the ears, but maybe a little to sanitary. I am a big fan of large, well produced recordings. My heart rate just does not go into spasms over this. Don't get me wrong, the guitars are crunchy, bass precise, drums punchy, and vocals up-front without being overbearing. For me, good for an occasional listen. Their fans will disregard what I have to say. That is good anyway; it's better to have your own opinions. —Donofthead (Fat)

NOFX: 45 or 46 Songs That Weren't Good Enough to Go on Our Other Records: 2xCD

The title is self explanatory. Well, not exactly. Some of these songs were on their other records. —Donofthead (Fat)

NUGGETS, THE: Are the Alchemists of Music: CD

Neo-psych hippie pop. Includes a cover of the Beatles' "Run for Your Life." It

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bored the shit outta me. Next. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sounds of Subterranea)

OFFBEATS: Dumb Looks Still Free: CD

A retrospective of an old Cleveland hardcore band that made the rounds during the years 1982-86. If you're looking for comparisons, think Heart Attack covering Adrenaline OD. The later tracks are slower and poppier, but not in a painful way. Good listen overall. —Jimmy Alvarado (Smog Veil)

ONE TIME ANGELS:

...Tricks and Dreams: CDEP

This is a six song offering from a melodic rock band hailing from California. I'm pretty sure that this is Doug from Screw32 on vocals and guitar. I have no reference point for this, because it's not the kind of music I ordinarily listen to. The tempos are mid-paced but things pick up considerable in the second half. The songs are definitely well structured and the vocal hooks are smart and well placed. It might interest some people that Jesse Michaels sings backup vocals on this. The guitar work is also interesting. The fourth song, "Two Steps to the Edge," really grabbed me, as it has a sort of mod-meets-XTC feel to it. I'll definitely put this song on a mix tape this summer. I would definitely recommend this to fans of post-punk melodic rock. —Yemin (Lookout)

OXBOW: An Evil Heat: CD

A record that starts with a couple of songs of Beefheart-fronts-EyeHateGod and then ambles off into kind of a noisy

ambient wasteland of thematic jams and non-moshable pure weight. Seems like a great record to take drugs to, or to play and try to convince yourself you're on drugs. I'm thinking of Robitussin, specifically, but I'm not trying to tell you what to do. I didn't get any packaging, so I can't say who's in it, but those Neurosis fellows have done some pretty out-there shit lately and it's on their label and I tell you it fits. Ought to be a soundtrack for something. —Cuss Baxter (Neurot)

OXYMORON:

Feed the Breed: CD

This is a lot happier music than you would expect to come from the surly looking guys in the pictures. That is, the three almost identical group shots. Nothing wrong with that, really, just not the most interesting design they could have come up with, and I am somewhat concerned that the members of this band cannot change the expressions on their faces. Very catchy sing along Oi/street punk, the songs are all set up so that I envision circle pits during verses and everyone singing along in a pile during shows. (Well, yeah, that's what happened when I saw these guys.) Musically upbeat working class anthems with pissed off lyrics and a straight ahead rock and roll spine. —Rich Mackin (GMM)

PIRANAS: self-titled: CD

This, apparently, is a re-release of their first album with tracks from a single and a radio ad tacked on for good measure. The music is crazed, chaotic trash rock that causes headaches in all the right

ways. —Jimmy Alvarado (On/On Switch)

PORNSTORE JANITOR:

Porn Again: CD

Really good musical melding of the Dwarves and early Poison Idea, but their weak attempts and shock value are unnecessary and boring. Damn good thing they were smart enough not to include a lyric sheet. —Jimmy Alvarado (Scooch Pooch)

PRETTY GIRLS MAKE

GRAVES: Good Health: CD

I like this. It's got that frenetic, about-to-pop-but-don't-worry-everything's-under-control feel of At the Drive-In. It's complex but not confusing. They don't forget to always propel their songs forward to keep the ass a-wigglin' and the heads a-bobbin'. It's also good because they don't shy away from the occasional tantrum and use a synthesizer in a way that doesn't suck scrote. The guitars scream down from far away mountains and tackle each other, like head-butting rams. Solid, exciting, repeated thuds. All the songs topple and spin and shoot around constantly like a perfect play on a really good pinball game (like Monster Mash). The female-fronted vocals add to the texture, watershed the harmonies, and then sprays them back out so the album seems to be dripping all around you like a fine mist when it's on the stereo, permeating everything it touches. Exciting stuff. For what it's worth, the bassist used to be in the Murder City Devils. Sounds nothing like 'em. —Todd (Lookout)

PRIESTS, THE:

Streetwalker: CD

Should I break it to them or should you? "The Makers already exist."

—Miss Namella J. Kim (Garage Pop)

RANDY: Cheater: CDEP

I can't stand bands with good intentions but sound like they're slowly putting a pole up the audience's collective ass. Randy is not one of them. With the legions of Hives insta-fans, a quick way to test their grit is to ask 'em about Randy, 'cause anyone up on Swedish-fuckin'-rock will attest their ability to slay some serious musical dragons. They go right to the rock'n'roll well-spring and hearken back Chuck Berry more than occasionally. I don't want to parallel the Hives too much, but this EP is sorta confusing, like the Hives's *Hate To Say I Told You So* three-song CDEP, which had two previously released tracks. *Cheater* contains a song off their last album, *The Human Atom Bombs*, two songs off their CD single, *I Don't Need Love*, and the title song that's also on the newest Epitaph comp—so there's only two songs exclusive to this release. Song origins aside, Randy plays crisp, intentionally lo-fi recorded rock'n'roll that covers topics between straight-up social consciousness (they've had tracks on AK Press comps) to just having fun and hanging out. I like that they're brash and not stodgy. I like the fact that they totally deny releasing a ska 7" that is long out of print. Randy's songs are so good that when co-creator of this here magazine and I are listening to 'em on his truck stereo after getting home, we'll sit with the engine running

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until the song ends, then go about our business. It just wouldn't be right to leave a song half played. I mean, shit, what do I have to do that's so important to mess with the magic of rock'n'roll? Powerful good. —Todd (G-7)

RETOX: *Last Call*: CD

Snappy hardcore that's pretty strong in the music department with, judging from the song titles, a lyrical obsession with beer and weed. They're astute riff thieves, biting shit from everyone from Rush to the Bad Brains, and they get away with it for the most part. —Jimmy Alvarado (Malt Soda)

RICHMOND SLUTS, THE: *Sweet Something b/w Sad City*: 7"

Mid-tempo classic rock/punk that's dancey and prances around. Sorta like where the Dead Boys mixed darkness and blood into slower songs like "Ain't It Fun," these guys do with light and smoke, fluffed up with an organ and shaker eggs. On a seemingly completely irrelevant note, their shaggy bowl, mousse-erect haircuts scare me, but they do parallel the music — meticulously fucked up (messy/clean), and highly stylized. Not a total Rolling Stones wannabe, either, but Mick Jagger's and Keith Richards' soundprints are all over this, too. Pretty good. —Todd (Disaster)

RIFFS, THE:

Dead End Dreams: CD

I can't believe how quickly I warmed to this record and how good some of these songs are. It's a weird blend of hooky guitars and I'm-so-fucked-up-let-me-

get-thru-this-song lyrics from Portland of all places. They aren't the most original songs, and it's not the most original sound. But it's the first time I've heard this style of music with this style of singing. And it works. I like it a lot, and I bet you will, too. —Money (TKO)

RITCHIE WHITES, THE:

Snitches Get Stitches: CD

Rock'n'roll in punk clothing. Not very thrilling. Sorry. —Jimmy Alvarado (TKO)

RUNNER: *The Goods*: CD

I suspect Runner are a good garage band that recorded an album when they were drunk and nobody was looking. —Rich Mackin (Sick Room)

SEX SEX SEX: *Like Crows on the Slaughterhouse Fence*: CD

The Misfits decide to play Swedish punk'n'roll and let a four-year-old write their lyrics. Throw away the lyric sheet and rock out. —Jimmy Alvarado (NDN)

SHOOTER MCGAVIN:

Saving the Day: 7"

These cats reminded me a tiny bit of that one and only outfit known as The Other, yet come nowhere close. Skip this and go track down The Other's CD. Trust me on this. Depending on your sex, you'll either be pitching a tent or getting wet as a mop upon hearing The Other. Sorry, guys, this just don't do it for me. —Designated Dale (jizzysheets@yahoo.co.uk)

SHRINKS, THE:

My Minds Gone: 7"

Super hot set of four Rip Off-styled mongolisms. All method, no message — there's something to be said for purity of vision, and it's "fuck, yeah!" —Cuss Baxter (Radio)

SHRINKS, THE:

My Minds Gone: 7"

Essentially this is the Trust Fund Babies with Mundo (ex- Workin' Stiffs) on the geetar. Killed By Death style punk on a hell bent search for a good time. Tightly wound, but loose just the same. Like a high strung paranoid crashing after a weekend of white crosses. There's an extra unlisted track with a different vocalist as well. —M.Avg (Radio)

SOLEDAD BROTHERS, THE: *Steal Your Soul and Dare Your Spirit To Move*: CD

You don't learn the blues, you have to live the blues to play the blues. I mean, learn all your lessons the hard way early on so you wise up on fools trying to come up on you; eat, sleep, and shit in places you never thought you would, learn to cry on cue, love your lover, leave your lover, kill your lover for leaving you, beg for money, have sex for shelter, drink your sorrows, fight your way out of a bar, eat your weight in humble pie, then pick up a guitar and let it all out. Yeah that's a lot like this record. If you liked the first Soledad release, it just keeps getting better with this latest offering. It sways with more rock'n'roll and (good, old) country with a heavy nod to seventies gospel/country-tinged Rolling Stones. The Brothers

(key lyricist Johnnie Walker and drums virtuosity Ben Swank) have added the organ, guitar, and sax accompaniment of Oliver Henry, making the Soledad more concentric with their new sound and direction. Don't get me wrong, if you're a fan of the previous debut record of packed, solid white meat alba-core blues, then you're gonna be a bigger fan than ever before with this here new record. The oggity boogity keeps in step with their rendition of Mississippi Fred McDowell's "Break 'Em Down" and a curious revision of "Ain't No Sunshine When She's Gone." Oh yeah, break it on down, sit on that porch, sweat your toxins out, and pray for death or rain... or both — just listen to this record, damn it. —Miss Namella J. Kim (Estrus)

SOLEDAD BROTHERS, THE: *Steal Your Soul and Dare Your Spirit to Move*: CD

Wanda snapped this up as soon as it got in the house. Whenever I'd go in her office to get a rubber glove or some upholstery tacks I'd hear a snatch of it and go, "nice Stones riff" or "I didn't know we had any Thorogood." Finally, I got it back and found it to be a heapin hot bowl of soul-funchin electric blues that ranges in intensity from sub-Gun Club through Doo Rag and on out to Immortal Lee County. If you were tapping it for car listening, there's not one song you would leave off. —Cuss Baxter (Estrus)

SONGS FOR EMMA: *Red Lies and Black Rhymes*: CD

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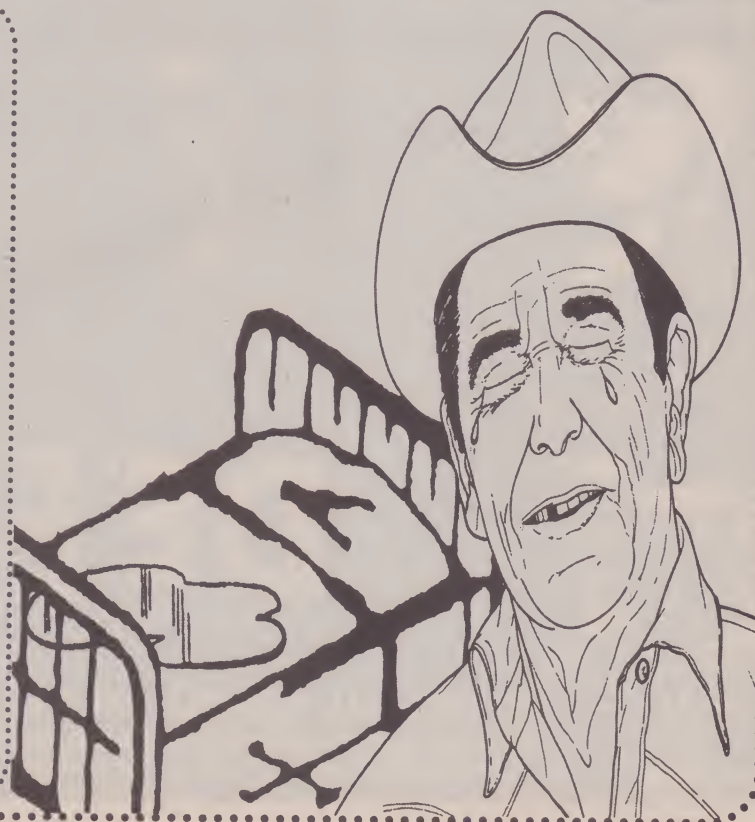
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histrionic. There's nothing bad about this CD, per se, other than the music is far too restrained. This is a tad disturbing to me, since I'm so predisposed to like these guys. Here are the reasons I thought I'd like them more than I do. 1.) They're named after Emma Goldman, the lady who said, "If you can't bowl while doing it, I don't want to be part of your revolution." Or something of that essence. Just fill in what you really like to do. 2.) The vocalist and lyricist, Tommy Strange, and the drummer, Dian Glaub, are both from Strawman (RIP), who I liked quite a bit. Tommy sounds a lot like Leatherface's Frankie Stubbs — like he flosses with burlap and huffs smoke directly from a factory chimney. 3.) The lyrics are pretty darn good. They're compassionate, well crafted and well thought out. They read like stand-alone poems that don't suck. The trouble I have is that the music seems secondary to the lyrics. The lyrics are delivered so deadpan and so up front, that the music itself sounds constrained, cobbled, and labored when they kick in. It's readily apparent in "Voice of Barcelona," which starts out feisty and rollicking, then downshifts and chugs to match the mid-pace vocal pattern. There are so few places in the songs with true breathing room or ignition. As a matter of fact, my favorite snatches on this CD are the beginnings of songs and the bridges between choruses when guitarist Mike Millet is allowed to zing around, but my overall ear for *Red Lies and Black Rhymes* is that it's running with the parking brake on, that it intentionally keeps all the tempos in first or second gear, and all screams and whis-

pers muted. Revolution to dance to? Give me something new to shake my ass to like the GC5, Strike Anywhere, or Dillinger Four. —Todd (Broken Rekids)

SPAZZ: *Sweatin' 3: Skatin', Satan & Katon: CD*

They've stretched their back catalog to three volumes?!?!? Jeezus... Maybe this is the final installment. Who knows. Okay, if you missed out when these records were originally available, here's your chance to catch up, or catch on. Sixty-seven cuts taken from nineteen records of various sizes. Power-violence legends influenced from power-violence originators like Man Is The Bastard and Crossed Out. One of the few good bands from the past decade. —M.Avrq (Slap A Ham)

SPITFIRES, THE: *Three: CD*

Okay. I don't ask for a lot. The requirements for being called "punk" are not as difficult as many make them out to be. I think that if a band gets interviewed on MTV of their own volition, they are not a punk band. Does this mean Green Day isn't punk anymore? Yes. Does this mean that Spitfires aren't a punk band? Yes. Come on, haven't you heard "MTV Get off the Air"? Send this to *Spin* or something, dude. Oh, and while I am it, fuck press kits. This is General Mills test marketing or something. I don't know. Who needs it? —Maddy (Longshot/Scratch)

SPONTANEOUS DISGUST:

Emo Love Fest: 7"

These guys just keep cranking them hits out! Like a breath of fresh air on a hot,

smoggy summer weekday. Spontaneous Disgust come along and do away with all the depression I find I suffer from after a long day's review session. While I find no clunker on this woefully too short "concept record," I will admit that I found "The Punk Rock Air Supply," "I Promise to Wring Your Neck," "Weepy Boy Band Cannon Fodder," and "Sometimes I Wish Someone Would Hit Me Repeatedly In the Head with a Hammer So I Could Relate to Piebald" to be the most satisfying tracks here, skillfully blending rockin' tuneage with acerbic wit to produce some of the most satisfying punk-related music in easily two decades. If you're already a fan, consider this mandatory. If you've never heard them, get your head out of yer ass already. Either way, snatch this up if you spot it, 'cause there's supposedly a grand total of 127 copies out there and I guarantee the ebay thieves are gonna be making a killing offa this in just a few months time. —Jimmy Alvarado (address illegible)

STOMPEDE: self-titled: 7"

Japanese HC + Pushead artwork + colored vinyl = collectible ebay bait. This band from Tokyo features Pushead artwork over red vinyl with blue and white splatters. Five tracks of intensely sweet Japcore. I see people sweating, salivating already. Many of you collector nerds out there might recognize this band. They were featured on Pushead's *Bacteria Sour* comps series Volume 2 (both versions) and Volume 3. Those comps were so hard to get just because Pushead's name was on it. I did manage to get the two versions of Volume 2 for

myself at a reasonable price. They were also on the *No Borders* comp that Suburban Home put out awhile back. By chance you do come across a copy, pick it up quick! First track, titled "Jo Anny Ta," blazes so fast you feel like a diesel truck almost ran you over. Lyrics are assumedly sung in English which is badly translated from Japanese. I always love that. Musically, they are heavy in every conceivable way. For those who love Japcore, you know what to expect. I need to get off the computer so I can scream into the speakers. —Donofthedeat (Badman)

STYLEX:

Wonder Program: CD

Some pretty good synth-heavy spazz rock here. At their heaviest, they're slightly reminiscent of Phantom Limbs on Prozac, which is to say they're less gloomy and not as intense. Not too shabby, considering I expected this to suck big time. —Jimmy Alvarado (Friction)

SUGAR SKULLS:

The Waking Hour: CD

Every time I hear the first (title) track, I want to say it sounds exactly like (LA's) X, but as the rest of the business flows past me, I have to eat that thought (it's okay; it tastes like Lucky Charms). Boy singer and girl singer weave a harmonic cat's cradle over bouncy-but-not-frantic instrumentation — instrumentation which often includes a small horn section that lends texture rather than asserting itself as horn section per se. There's at least one cussword if that's your criteria, but mostly it's just a charming,

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sometimes pretty, mid tempo listening pleasure. —Cuss Baxter (BAK)

SUPER CHINCHILLA RESCUE MISSION / BOTTLE DIRT: Split 7"

Super Chinchilla Rescue Mission: I swear by these guys. They're another new-ish band that hasn't written a bad song yet and continues to improve. If the name throws you, don't let it. The band doesn't dress in matching Chinchilla suits with capes while occupying their time saving cats from trees. As a matter of fact, they're gimmickless. If you enjoy the tightly-revved inner smolder of Leatherface, the heat blast of Panthro UK United 13, the earnest, evocative lyrics of Tiltwheel, or just enjoy stripped-of-artifice punk rock that's as satisfying to yell along to as read along with, I recommend this without reservation. It's top notch it-ain't-all-been-done-before punk rock. Just straight ahead, densely played, amazingly well written tunes, from lyrics, to guitars intertwining, to drum and bass interlock. These two songs are as good a reason as any to buy a turntable. Bottle Dirt: It is truly strange to hear a Japanese band sound like they're from Midwest. Stranger yet is the vocalist seems to be borrowing directly from the Replacements' Paul Westerberg's throat while the rest of the band rifles through and punches early 'Mats subject matter straight in the arm. (i.e.: "We are still drinking though our bodybags are ready.") The good news is that they don't do a complete carbon copy, pen in some mighty catchy hooks of their own, and deliver two excellent songs. —Todd (Snuffy Smile)

TEENAGE REJECTS:

Teenage Trash, Vol. 2: 7"

Rock and fucking roll! The Teenage Rejects are proving that Wisconsin is the capital of rock and roll (seriously!) with this super great record! Fast rock and roll (think: Rip Off Records style) and the cover art for the record looks so damn cool! Plus this record features the Wisconsin punk classic "We Don't Like You," one of the best songs to come outta the Midwest in quite some time! If you like rock and roll, you need this record! If this were a cereal, it'd be Corn Pops! All right, bay-bee! —Maddy (Alien Snatch)

TEMPLARS: Reconquista: CD

A collection of tracks from assorted splits and comps from this venerable skinhead band. I've made no attempt to hide my disdain for most modern skinhead music, especially that of the American variety, but the Templars have always been kinda the exception to the rule for me. Their sound seems just as authentic (for lack of a better word) as anything put out in the "golden age" of oi, and they seem to truly believe what they happen to be on about at any moment, which is more than can be said for much of the other bands pushing similar wares. Recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (GMM/Victory)

THOUGHT RIOT: Shattered Mirror Syndrome: CD

It's kinda of ironic to me that this band is on A-F Records. The first two songs, I thought they sounded like Anti-Flag and AFI. See the irony? They need to change their name to incorporate the

"A" and "F." Musically and vocally, the AFI reference is stronger but the ideology is more Anti-Flag. Solid production in line with both bands referenced. The songs are damn right catchy. Promoted right, this band should achieve a following similar to the referenced bands. I was quite pleased with what was presented to me. —Donofthead (A-F)

TOTIMOSHI: Mysterioso: CD

Some more swell noise from these guys. Imagine High on Fire covering Nirvana's *Bleach* and you ain't too far outta the ballpark. Just the right amount of volume to be rockin', the right amount of derivation to be familiar and the right amount of originality to be worth listening to. —Jimmy Alvarado (Berserker)

TOYS THAT KILL / THE RAGIN' HORMONES: 7"

Toys That Kill have yet to disappoint. They're stealthy. If you listen with a lazy ear, they may sound merely spastic, a little retarded, but with repeated listens — as opposed to bands like The Vandals and Guttermouth who revel in being booger-eatin' morons with cryogenically frozen minds of twelve-year-olds — their smartypants quotient becomes apparent. Their songs never lull, stutter step, or miscalculate. I can hear flashes and snaps of Cheap Trick, Psychedelic Furs, and "I know that song"-ness amplified, messed with, and groomed in their own style. I'm not saying they're geniuses, but the lyrics and music combined reinforce the idea that this is, indeed, a band that doesn't have to be flashy and doesn't have to use big

words and confusing artshit to continue on a unique path, one that I'm happy to listen to over and over again. Included are two songs that aren't on their highly recommended CD, *The Citizen Abortion*: "Run From Love" and "Birds in Catsuits." The Ragin' Hormones — if Chuck Berry was dead, this would be like watching a band piss in his mouth at the funeral. So awful I don't even want to comment on it. —Todd (Stardumb)

TRISTEZA: self-titled: 12"

The sound floats into the air and hangs as all these elements float about and build upon one another. At times the compositions seem repetitious, but listen closer and you'll discover many layers under the surface. Brass and woodwinds snaking about, guitars skittering through fluid-like bass lines and swoops. Ambient music that can be quiet and loud all at once. The drumming can be subdued while a baritone sax borders on skronk, and in the background you can hear the sound of space. —M.Avr (Gravity)

UNDISPUTED HEAVY WEIGHT CHAMPIONS:

Stay Down: CD

Sometimes I wonder if my trying to trade in crappy CDs like this for better ones might be ruining my reputation. I mean sure, I'm a reviewer and all, but I would imagine most would think I willingly sought out this unholy garbage. Last time I went in to trade, I coulda swore the guy behind the counter looked at me kinda funny as he flipped

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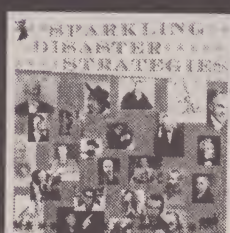
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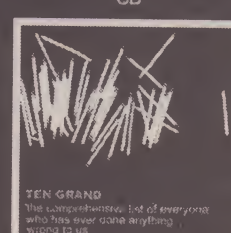
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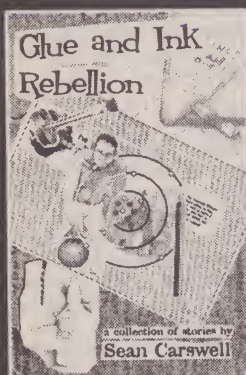
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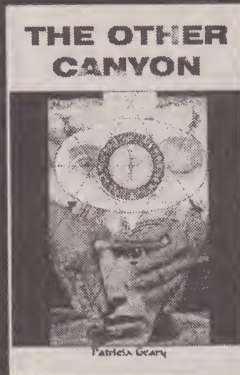
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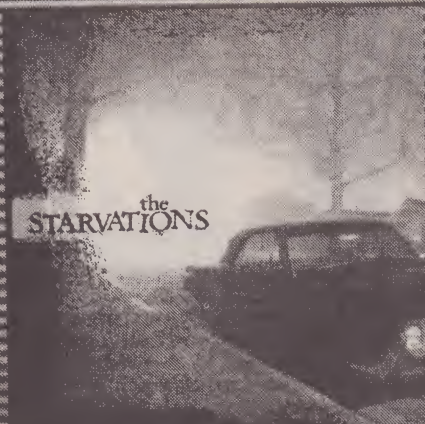
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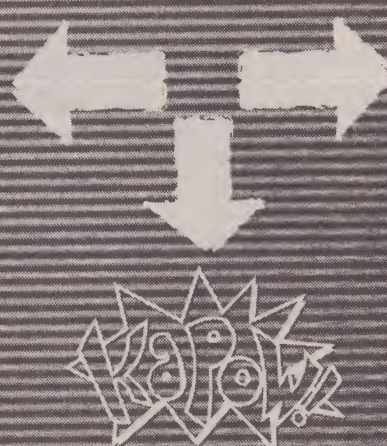
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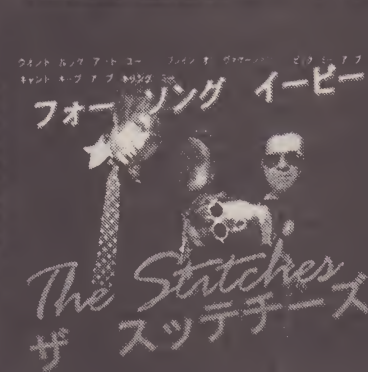
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through the eighteenth emo CD I inadvertently picked up outta the review pile. Maybe I should just stop trying to trade 'em in and go back to giving out as Christmas presents to people who owe me money and chucking them at annoying pigeons like I used to. Oh yeah, this disc sucked pretty hard. —Jimmy Alvarado (Undisputed Heavyweight Champions)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Home on the Range Volume 1: CD*

A Midwest comp with twelve more bands that ain't worth the trouble it took to listen to 'em. Apparently limited to 1,000, which is about the best thing I can say about this. —Jimmy Alvarado (Bingo Lady Record Collective)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Nearvana: CD

Oh, hey, look — it's a Nirvana covers CD. Nirvana completists will probably want this. If you want mine, drive over to the front of my place and honk — I'll come out and throw it at you (not TO you — AT you). Why? Because you wasted some high-priced gasoline to drive over here for nothing, except for a jewelcase-sized dent on the side of your vehicle. Shame on you for even considering it. —Designated Dale (Tinnitus)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Ramones Forever: CD

An international compilation wherein bands from all over the map mangle Ramones songs. Most of the tracks blow sheep (unless techno versions of "I Wanna Be Sedated" and "Psychotherapy" are your cup of tea), and the remainder leave little doubt that Belgium should be wiped off the face of the earth. As far as "tributes" go, maybe they should've just walked up to the remaining Ramones and kick each of 'em square in the balls. That would've been much less painful than having one's name attached to this abomination. Oh, wait, Marky was involved in this. Guess he really, really needed the money. —Jimmy Alvarado (Radical)

VELVET TEEN, THE:

Immortality: 7"

Lured by the purty picture disk, I was punished by listening to something that, by comparison, made the Carpenters sound as heavy as Slayer or Enya as fast as Bad Brains. Even if I were a fourteen-year-old girl wearing nothing but a Slinky, I'd still think I could kick all these guys asses and bitch slap 'em with their own arms, but they'd probably start playing and I'd fall asleep. Fuck you all, you triangle-tinkling Tylenol PM of a band. I've read children's stories more threatening. —Todd (Pandacide)

VERY METAL:

Hit and Run: CD

Stop on the dime St. Louis outfit that plays music that is a mixture of Motorhead meets Discharge, leaning a little more in the metal spectrum. The name of the band should have given that point away. The lyrics are more on a personal view of what disturbs them. The production is tight, not overblown to make it sugar coated. It is balanced and the energy level is in the red. The sound is pummeling yet pleasing to

these ears. Their angst is truly felt through the music. This is their second full length and is every bit as good as their first. Worthwhile of a notice. —Donofthedeath (Beer City)

VINCENTS, THE/IGNITERS, THE: *Split 7"*

The Vincents do a hard rock, Stooges-influenced thing that didn't strike me one way or the other. Maybe I'm just burned out on that stuff right now. The Igniters were an awful, slow, metal-influenced dirge of dookie! If this split were a cereal, it'd be Corn Flakes (okay cereal, nothing I ever buy these days) and All Bran (from a cereal scene I am definitely NOT into). —Maddy (Diaphragm)

VIRUS, THE:

Nowhere to Hide: CD

Spiky-headed English-inspired hardcore, kinda like GBH with the singer from Voodoo Glow Skulls handling vocal duties. Not very original or anything, but in a world littered with suck-ass bands like Total Chaos and the Casualties, this is a welcome change of pace. —Jimmy Alvarado (Punkcore)

WATCH IT BURN/ TILT-WHEEL: *Twice the Dose: CD*

Writing for *Razorcake*, I knew it was only a matter of time before Todd sent some Tiltwheel my way. Watch it Burn is all right, but these three Tiltwheel songs are makin' me want more and more! Think Jawbreaker or the Dillinger Four. Lyrics like, "I'm finding solace in broken things like windshields, bottles, hopes and dreams," with great mid-tempo punk rock. Plus, in Todd's interview with Tiltwheel (available on the *Razorcake* web-page!) lead singer Davey says great things like, "OK. You go into a bar and you just want to get mangled. I do this. I always tell the bartender straight off, 'Here's the deal. I'm fucking depressed. I'm pissed off. Something's going to break.'" Or "I like a lot of country music and I don't really see a difference between country music, blues, and punk rock. I think punk rock is blues. It's the natural progression from blues, from sitting on a porch, trouble on your mind and you're a long ways away from home, that's what blues is all about. To me, that's punk rock. So, that's country music, too." My thoughts exactly! So, if you haven't already heard Tiltwheel, maybe this isn't the best place to start, but start somewhere! If this were a cereal, it'd be just one bite of Fruit Loops! I want more! —Maddy (ADD)

WHORE DADDY-OHS: *Kill*

Your Stepdad: 7"

Goofball punk, sorta like the Skudz without the drive. "John Lennon Sucks (As a Roommate)" warranted a chuckle, although on the whole it wasn't all that impressive. —Jimmy Alvarado (nigelsux@earthlink.net)

WIPERS, THE:

Box Set: 3 x CD

The Wipers were (are?) an incredible band. They transcend all musical categorization. Punk, rock, psychedelia, country, etc. They mix up the music and create their own rich sound. Anyone who has heard this band will agree, the

Wipers are a force to reckon with. Greg Sage is amazing on guitar, and it's his style that really gives this band the edge, not to mention the impassioned vocals that tell tales of paranoia, loneliness, and alienation. This three CD set contains their first three LPs (*Is This Real?*, *Youth of America*, and *Over the Edge*, as well as outtakes, some unreleased, liner notes, and rejected cover art. Not to be missed. Seriously, once you hear this, the Wipers will be one of your favorite bands. No hype, just the truth. —M.Avrq (Zeno)

X: *At Home With You: CD*

Nice piece of work here. This is the second (?) album from the Australian band with claims to this name and not the Los Angeles band. While just as primal as their first album, this has somehow got a more refined feel to it, almost like what Birthday Party would've been had they been more rockin'. —Jimmy Alvarado (Morphius)

YACOPSAE:

Einstweilige Vernichtung: CD

Gawd, this five inch aluminum disc contains the blasting power of an A-bomb! Faster than what would seem physically possible, they're super tight as well. Unbelievable. The instruments sound rickety and dirty, perhaps it's from how the band mercilessly throttles 'em in every single song. But that's good, as the power of their music is often found in the rawness and urgent approach. Not one song close to a minute long. Many not even thirty seconds. —M.Avrq (Slap A Ham)

YESTERDAY'S KIDS: *Can't Hear Nothin': CD*

Yesterday's Kids is an amazing pop band. Yes, that's right. A pop band in the pages of *Razorcake*! Maybe you could say that there's some sort of punk influence, and maybe there is a sorta Sweet Baby, Mr. T Experience thing going on at times. But these boys were raised on good, classic oldies. Beatles and Herman's Hermits records, oh yeah! If you aren't a total punk asshole, and if you love sixties pop, you will like this band! Unfortunately, I found some aspects of the recording a little annoying — too many instruments, too much stuff goin' on. But the songs are still there. And it's not just my Wisconsin pride speakin'. Yesterday's Kids really should take over the world! And while you're at it, pick up their CDEP on Panic Button, *Everything Used to be Better*. If this were a cereal, it'd be Frosted Flakes! A classic treat for you and yours! —Maddy (Panic Button)

YOUNG AND THE USELESS, THE: *A Smile Is No Good for Me: CD*

The lyrics and vocals are kinda emo-ish. Insert a tear here. The music does tend to get tedious at times but breaks out at points when they start playing fast. But... Attention not there... Fighting urge to push stop button... Must listen to whole disc... I have failed... —Donofthedeath (Thor)

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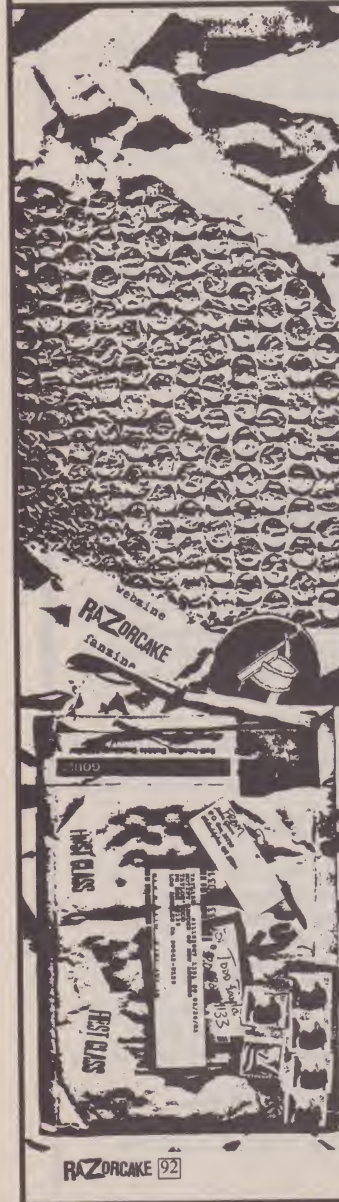
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ARISE!, #1, \$1 (free in Minneapolis), 8 1/2 x 11, newsprint, 32 pgs.

I don't know why I thought this would be a real fish-wrapper of a zine. I guess because so many people who work at the Arise! bookstore and info shop handed me their zine when I was there, and I'm always skeptical of free zines. But I was wrong. This zine rocks. It's full of well-written articles about police brutality, protests, DIY democracy, the story of the Arise! collective, global economics, and so on. Perhaps the most impressive thing about this zine was their coverage of the Palestine/Israeli conflict. It's a thoroughly researched collection of passages from several different books about Palestine and Israel. Together, these passages give a detailed history of the conflict and a broad view of the Palestinian perspective. I ended up reading this zine cover to cover, and I recommend not only sending these folks a buck to check out their writing, but I also recommend swinging by the bookstore the next time you're in Minneapolis. —Sean (Arise!, 2441 Lyndale Ave. S, Minneapolis, MN 55405)

ASSASSIN AND THE WHINER, #14, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied

I'm sure a lot of you have heard of this zine before. If you haven't, *Assassin and the Whiner* is a comic book with stories about the life of Carrie. This issue is pretty dark — lots of stuff on depression, anger, feeling asexual, alcoholism... reading this was a little uncomfortable. But there's also some humor thrown in — plus a pretty great strip about buying a bra for the first time after discovering saggy breasts. (Ack! Why are women cursed with such matters?! May it never happen to me!) Plus, the drawing is usually really good. If you haven't read this already, give it a try! —Maddy (Carrie McNinch, PO Box 481051, Los Angeles, CA 90048-9651)

COUNTERINTELLIGENCE, #1, free (but definitely toss him a buck or a couple of stamps to cover postage), 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 38 pgs. The inaugural issue of this wordy, yet deeply profound, zine is appropriately subtitled "An Outlet for Rebellious Expression." It's the innermost ruminations of a poetically creative and spiritually enlightened non-conformist type who definitely possesses a deep-rooted appreciation of the English language. He convincingly espouses his personal opinions and political points-of-view with the utmost of prideful flair. Each page is eloquently crammed with colorful self-reflective poetry, as well as articulate outspoken rants about

everyday internal struggles, the pained uncertainties of life and death, greed, corruption, governmental bureaucracy, positive self-esteem, earnest servitude to the Hare Krishna faith, individuality, insanity, turmoil, confusion, and the general unnerving chaos that life often relentlessly spews into our unsuspecting faces. Although this particular lil' periodical obviously lacks humor and although some of the content is blatantly too dark and politically correct for my obnoxiously inebriated tastes, it's still a thought-provoking and gut-wrenching read which will definitely get the ol' brain cells to exercising. —Roger Moser, Jr. (CounterIntelligence, 755 Douhet Drive, Unit #46, Barksdale AFB, LA 71110-2429; freedomthroughfreewill@yahoo.com)

DOWN IN FLAMES, \$3

Jimmy Reject, ex-member of the Dimestore Haloos and a really big GG Allin fan, writes his punk rock life story. Peeing on Donny the Punk, briefly joining a "fascistic art band," smoking A LOT of weed, meeting Mykel Board, hallucinating and thinking he's Satan, then Jesus... Jimmy has quite the story to tell! Never boring! Here's a sample, "As I persevered through the blazing days and soothing nights, more psychic revelations came to me. My defunct garage band the Dismal Serenade had recordings (made secretly by a CIA surveillance van parked outside the O'Keefe garage) that were climbing the charts. The cover of these singles had an actor portraying me, giving a limp wrist gesture in front of a banner of a swastika. A gay nazi. That's how the public perceived me. Fuck 'em all. I was famous." How could you NOT want to read this? —Maddy (Jimmy Reject, 115 W. Squantum St. #203, Quincy, MA 02171)

DRUNKEN MASTER:

Unwanted Dead or Alive #6, \$2.95, 8 1/4 X 10 1/4, color cover, offset, thick stock, 48 pgs. Aside from being a kick-ass painter, photographer, comic strip artist, story teller, and all-around bad-mofo — Kiyoshi Nakazawa finds a way to pull all that together into what is now known as *Drunken Master* #6, *Unwanted Dead or Alive*. For those of you who now Drunken Master you might guess at what creeps therein. For those of you who don't, this issue is full of comics — ranging from violent to humorous and mixing both, interviews with the likes of the Dropkick Murphys, and TSOL, and tail-kicking fighting styles. Aka the world brought to

you by Drunken Master. It's good, it's good. Check it out. —Bradley Williams (Lost Dog Press, PO Box 51033, Pasadena, CA 91115; <knakazawa@earthlink.net>)

DUNK AND PISS: #7, \$1, pocket sized, photocopied, 62 pgs.

?How could this be? Are my eyes playing tricks on me? I could have sworn that this zine was called *DRunk and Piss*!?! Holy shit I have lost it! What the hell? Shit! Alex, I am sorry for that. I'll owe you a few rounds at some hole-in-the-wall bar if and when I meet you. Now, if I have not damaged my integrity too much, by f-n' up the title of this fine zine, let me say that *Dunk and Piss* serves the purpose once again. Scratchy comics, good stories on the trip-ups of the younger years, reviews, and much more. Plus it fits in your pocket yo! —Bradley Williams (Dunk and Piss, 11 Alger Dr., Rochester, NY 14624)

FRESH RAG, #3, \$2

If punk rock and roll (a la Devil Dogs) is your thing, you might wanna get yourself a copy of the latest Fresh Rag. Interviews with the Hellbenders, Lazy Cowgirls, and Adam West, articles on AC/DC and GNR from the always excellent Josh Rutledge, show, movie, record, book, and zine reviews, plus a CD straight outta Steve (King of Rock and Roll) Baise's studio (with tracks by D4 (not Dillinger Four), Dirty Fingers, Bombpops, Tinglez, Jet Boys, and Nancy & the Knockers. Rock and roll! —Maddy (Holly, 816 Baldwin Ave. #1, Norfolk, VA 23517)

FILM GEEK, #7,

\$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 28 pgs.

In a very pure sense, *Film Geek* is what a zine should be: a photocopied collection of stuff written by people who have a genuine enthusiasm for something that otherwise would never be covered in print. In the case of *Film Geek*, the genuine enthusiasm is geared towards B-movies. Personally, I haven't kept up with B-movies since *Creature Feature* went off the air about twenty years ago, but the writers of this zine are so gung-ho, I get swept up in it. I swear I'll rent the movies and I make a mental list. Then, I go to the video store and forget my list and rent whatever I would've rented anyway. And still, I look forward to the next issue of *Film Geek*, because, in the end, I realize that I don't really want to see these movies as much as I want to read about them in this zine. And, yes, I mean that as a compliment. —Sean (Alan Fare, PO Box 501113, Tulsa, OK 74150-1113)

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GARAGE AND BEAT!, #6, \$3.50, 8 1/2 x 11, offset, 56 pgs. If there's one magazine that I eagerly anticipate receiving every couple of months (along with the visually stimulating *Razorcake*, of course!), it's definitely the almighty, mind-dazzling *GAB!* in all of its fabulous shag-a-licious glory!!! I'm inevitably always guaranteed to have one helluva frolicking, rollicking good time when reading this grandiose and groovy lil' mag. Why, honey, it's tastier than eatin' eel pie, guzzlin' Guinness stout on draft, and lustfully snoggin' Emma Peel all at once! As usual, you can wholeheartedly expect the ultimate in jovial and entertaining interviews (this eye-titillating issue includes The Monks, The Lemon Drops, The Creation, Jeff Punk Rock Martin of The Surf Trio and Blood Red Vinyl, and Andy Babiuk of The Chesterfield Kings). There's also a brain-rattlin' array of well-researched and cheeky-fresh articles about stellar '60s-era rarities, out-of-print auditory treasures, and other such obscure rockin' riff-raff. And I need not even hesitate to mention the always enticing carnival of colorfully descriptive reviews, which never fail to awe, amuse, and excite me to no end whatsoever! If John Lennon, Dave Clark, Lenny Bruce, Roky Erickson, and The Rutles had ever collectively published their own zine, it would've surely been *GAB!* — what a deliciously alluring read it is! —Roger Moser, Jr. (P. Edwin Letcher, 2754 Prewett St., LA, CA 90031; www.garageandbeat.com)

GET OFF MY LAWN!, #18, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2" copied

These kids get points for titling their zine after one of my favorite phrases. Your standard zinester's zine; rants, babbling, cut and paste (albeit very well done cut and paste) layout, reviews and an interview with the singer from Grade. Oddly enough, a minimal collage of a guy hugging someone from another photo and the solid black page are the things that got my attention the most. Certainly worth the buck if you enjoy zines as a concept. —Rich (Get Off My Lawn!, PMB 141, 7107 S Yale, Tulsa, OK 74136)

LOW HUG, #7, \$2, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, A reviewer in *Reader's Guide to the Underground Press* apparently called this zine, "unpretentious and honest, though not necessarily exciting, since 1998." (How do I know this? It's in the zine... twice!) Indeed, *Low Hug* is not horrible, but certainly not an interesting read. While some parts were

just boring, others were kind of irritating. Particularly annoying was the article by A.J. about 9/11. She spoke of Dubya's "newfound lucidity" and how no one will ever be the same. Add statements like, "And all about me, thousands of people defeating terrorism in the best way possible: by enjoying a beautiful, tranquil day in peace," and you get the idea. The other 9/11-themed writer was a lot better, but it wasn't enough to save this zine from the overwhelming feeling of mediocrity. —Maddy (Low Hug, Station A, PO Box 2574, Champaign, IL 61825)

PICK YOUR POISON, #1 & 2, \$1, copied, 48 pgs. each I started reading issue #1 of *Pick Your Poison* and nothing really grabbed me at first. It's a series of very short stories — anecdotes really — about a kid growing up in suburban Minneapolis. And even though it didn't grab me initially, I continued reading. I can't say why. Maybe I was just bored that day and had nothing better to do. Maybe I unconsciously saw some potential here. I kept reading. The kid's friends grew more interesting. His life became crazier. He started shoplifting and doing fucked up things. He smoked too much pot for someone his age. His friends seemed to be on a collision course with doom. His life and childhood started seeming more and more familiar. He and his friends got in a lot of trouble with their parents and with the cops. At the same time, their parents and the cops were barely tapping into their juvenile delinquency. Oh yeah, I thought, I remember this from my own adolescence. The settings have changed and the situations and names are different, but a lot of it is acutely similar. Damn, I could really relate to this kid. I was totally hooked. I devoured issue #1 and started in on #2. The stories got better. The author wrote more intelligently, more insightfully about his experiences. In the end, I was glad that I'd kept reading. *Pick Your Poison* turned out to be a real gem of a zine. I'm looking forward to #3 and I'm hoping that Nate keeps me on his mailing list. —Sean (Nate Gangelhoff, PO Box 8995, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

QUICKDUMMIES, #14, \$4, 8 1/2 x 11, newsprint, 96 pgs.

I started flipping through this zine and saw a short interview with the Urchin. I like the Urchin but I also know that none of those guys speak much English, so I was curious to see what they had to say. I read the interview and the lack of ability to speak English came through. Not

from the Urchin. From the interviewer. And, as far as I can tell, English is his only language. I kept reading through this zine because they covered some of my favorite bands: Strike Anywhere, Toys That Kill, the GC5, and Out Cold. With each interview, I became more frustrated with the zine. The interview made Todd from TTK sound like an idiot. And I know Todd. He's a pretty intelligent, well-spoken guy. The interviews with Strike Anywhere and Out Cold made those bands look like idiots, and, if you flip the zine in your hands back a few pages and read the interviews with those bands, you'll find that they're pretty intelligent and well-spoken also. Finally, I realized that the real problem was that the editor of this zine (who also conducted these interviews) couldn't write a sentence if his life depended on it. Usually, I'm pretty patient with bad grammar and inarticulate writers, but while I was reading *Quickdummies*, I had no idea what the fuck this guy was writing about most of the time. To steal a line from him, *Quickdummies* was "a good ideal at the time, but it's outdated it." —Sean (*Quickdummies*, 6810 Bellaire Dr., New Orleans, LA 70124)

THE RIGHT PATH, #13, ??? 8 1/2 x 11, newsprint

It seems every big hardcore scene has its local zine like this, and usually they seem to be more about layout and design than writing, and often they are so much about layouts that are so fancy on the computer they are designed on, that they can't be read when printed. John Twentyfive does a great job here breaking that mold, keeping the pages interesting but very readable. The writing is good in that it is informative and gets the point across, but many of the columns come across as being written so that the author can have a column in a zine, not from any inspirational thought. The writers seem to know a lot about hardcore bands I don't personally care all that much about (and that's me, not a judgement), but there are lots of moments like reviews of Citizen Fish... "a band I've meant to check out." and *Suburban Voice* "This was actually my first encounter with this zine." I don't mean to pick this apart so much, I think it's just a clash of my thirty year-old punk self not getting these kids today. —Rich Mackin (Josh Lyons, 244 Rutgers, Rochester NY 14607, www.enterprisehardcore.com)

SHREDDING PAPER: #31, \$3.95, 8 1/4 X 10 1/4, color cover black and white print, 114 pgs.

On the cover it states that there are "hundreds of punk and indie pop reviews" inside. Actually there are somewhere around 330 record reviews (I tried to count them but lost track), 7 inch reviews, and a book review section. I'd have to say that *Shredding Paper* is interested in the aforementioned punk and indie styles, and basically all the types of music you want and/or need to know about. There's an interview with Andrew W.K., 'who I saw pictures of, and heard about everywhere a month ago. I have yet to realize his music is playing at anytime I may or may not have been listening. My lack of knowledge is in no way indicative of *Shredding Paper*, unless you take into account that although I still haven't heard the music, I know more about it, which keeps me interested, be the end result good or bad — what more can you expect from print? Should it fold your clothes and scramble your eggs? I know... I know... it would be nice. —Bradley Williams (*Shredding Paper*, PO Box 2271, San Rafael, CA 94912)

SLUG AND LETTUCE: #71, free in person or p.o.p. through the mail, 11 1/4 X 15, black and white newsprint, 20 pgs.

I'd heard of *Slug and Lettuce* before, but until this point I'd never seen, and hence, never read it. There are a lot of zine reviews which is f-n' cool, book reviews, and record reviews of bands that, taking to heart the reviews and pictures, might just well kick some ass. There are stories on sex, being a "grown-up," and learning to live with troublesome emotional/ neurological conditions. There is a comic and a classified section as well. All in all, this is on the up and up. Highly recommended. —Bradley Williams (*Slug and Lettuce*, PO Box 26632, Richmond, VA 23261-6632)

SPIDDER: #6, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 3/4, photocopied, 28 pgs.

Herein lie comics, ghost stories, a review of a sound guy, and a right-mighty fine taste in music. This is pretty much the Arkam/Black Owl Records answer to zines. It's a staple of the Alabama house show arena. One thing — they have staplers at the copy shop. I used to use it, ya'll might want to as well. That or a damned paper clip or something. I about lost the pages for this one before I got around to reviewing it. Write to the new Mr. and Ms. Barrier for your stapled copy today. —Bradley Williams (The sinister cult of Spider, 3000 County Rd. 10, Florence, AL 35633)

STRAY, #1, \$2, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied with color cover, 56 pgs.

This is an entire zine dedicated to the premise that the editor, Robert Kranzke, is *not* gay. He writes about male actors who he thinks are cute, he admits to washing and styling his hair every day, he has a favorite sweater (a navy blue girl's cardigan), he's a huge fan of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and he reads *Elle Décor UK*, but he's not gay. Of course, the initial, knee-jerk reaction to this would be to say to Kranzke, "Dude, you're gay," and dismiss the zine. But I didn't want to be a knee-jerk, so I kept reading. What I found was a bunch of pretty funny pieces about and/or by a man obsessed with the gray areas of human sexuality. He wrote about his favorite teen movies of the past few years. He wrote about who he would most like to be stuck on a deserted island (called "Hump Island") with — first five females, then five males. He even covered the "sweet and charming" parts of the *Kama Sutra*. There's also a comic in here about two guys who buy a dildo, ostensibly for one of the guys' girlfriends, and everyone thinks the guys are gay. The guy who doesn't get the dildo keeps asking the other guy if he's gonna stick it up his ass. I couldn't stop laughing. There were also two

quizzes. The first one was to see if you were a "strayboy" (a *straight gay* boy). I scored low on this one. What can I say? I've never gone to the store to buy Biore strips and my personal grooming habits are the pits. I noticed that the second quiz — to see if I was a "straygirl" — was pretty non-specific gender-wise, so I took that quiz, too. I scored really high on that one. Apparently, that means I'm a lesbian. Not that there's anything wrong with that. I've kind of had my suspicions all along. So it wasn't hard for me to deal with this revelation. My next question was this, though: if I'm a lesbian, does that make my girlfriend a lesbian also, even though she's dating a man (me)? I wrestled with this one for a while and finally decided that, yes, my girlfriend is a lesbian because she's with me. Thanks *Stray*! But beyond the silly and lighthearted, there are some very well-written, deeper pieces in this zine, also. One is a fantastic essay on state of modern feminism by Jenn Quinly. The zine is worth picking up for that essay alone. The second piece is a story written by Kranzke about riding the bus home with his girlfriend and when three knuckleheads accost him for being a "faggot." Kranzke stands up to these guys, and they end up beating him up. The story is labeled as "fic-

tion" — and maybe it really is fiction — either way, it sheds a whole new light on Kranzke's sexuality blurring. All in all, *Stray* is serious and silly and well-written, and, deep down inside, I don't care one way or another what the gender of Kranzke's lover is. I just like reading his zine. —Sean (Robert Kranzke, 2658 Griffith Park Blvd. #253, LA, CA 90039)

URBAN PANTHEIST, Spring 2002, \$3, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied/ color cover

While many zines are collections of rants and collage art that form a tapestry of insight into the creator, this zine has the specific goal of "helping... to understand and appreciate urban wildlife." Most of this zine reads like a nature guide focused on the animals you would see in the city — crows this issue, rats and pigeons in previous ones — as well as articles on animals that live in zoos besides the ones in cages, and animals that live in parks. This reminds me of channel surfing and landing on the Discovery channel, you might not be thinking about how you want to learn about crows, but as soon as you start taking it in, you find yourself fascinated. In this case, not just because of the subject, but also because of the witty, high quality writing. Good layout and decently

reproduced photos make this zine about the subject, not a quest to figure it out. —Rich Mackin (Jef Taylor, 140A Harvard Ave Suite 308, Allston, MA 02134)

WONKAVISION: #16, \$3.95, 8 X 10 1/2, color cover/black and white print, 82 pgs.

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory is, in my opinion, one of, if not the best, book made into a movie ever. So when I first read this title, my eyes must have widened, as no one was there to witness my first exposure to *Wonkavision*. I am left only to speculate as to the physical signs hinting at my excitement. This is a pretty cool zine. If you like, what I consider, pop-punk or melodic punk then this will right up your alley. Inside there are band interviews, record reviews, some short fiction, and what-have-you. There is a cool series of interviews with some of the moguls in the world of indie/punk labels (i.e. Fat Wreck Chords and Fueled by Ramen), as well as conversation reviews, in which a random CD or record gets played and the conversation that arises from it is recorded as a review. This is well put together, and they have a website too. —Bradley Williams (Wonka Vision, PO Box 63642, Philadelphia, PA 19147)



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The Civil Disobedience Handbook

Edited by James Tracy, paperback, 95 pgs.

I almost never go to malls. I hate them. It's not the unbridled consumerism that makes me hate malls. It's not the overall cheesiness or the fact that all the clothes sold in malls are ridiculously overpriced and were sewn for pennies in sweatshops throughout the world. It's not the fact that, like the mass media, all the stores in most malls are owned by a few elite corporations. I mean, all that stuff bugs me. All of that explains why malls are fundamentally evil places. But whenever I find myself stuck in a mall, I look at the faces and clothing of people walking by, and I inevitably realize that these are the people on whom advertising works. I look at these people in their name brand clothes and name brand shoes, wearing name brand make-up, carrying name brand bags from name brand stores and walking to name brand cars, and I think to myself, "If all you bastards weren't such suckers for advertising, I wouldn't be constantly besieged by ads." And then, I feel hatred. It may seem as if I'm digressing here, but I'm not. I'm working myself towards a point.

I got stuck in a mall the other day. It wasn't my fault. I was getting film developed and they told me it would only take an hour. When I came back an hour later, they told me it would be another half hour. Then another half hour. Then another. I ended up sitting at a table adjacent to the Nordstrom's coffee shop for nearly two hours. Since I wanted to do something more productive than just sit and stare loathingly at name brand fuckers, I started to read *The Civil Disobedience Handbook*. It soon became the perfect antidote for everything I was feeling.

The Civil Disobedience Handbook is essentially a collection of essays and tidbits about different ways people have fought and continue to fight for change in their world. It starts off with a brief preface explaining why civil disobedience still matters. From there, the book runs through a series of short chapters documenting the positive changes that civil disobedience has brought about: casting off the shackles of

the British Empire, ending slavery, giving women the right to vote, creating the eight-hour workday, restoring civil rights, protecting a woman's right to an abortion, and moving all the way up to closing down the WTO meetings in Seattle in 1999. None of these chapters do a very thorough job of covering these historical issues, but together, the chapters do an excellent job of demonstrating the historical (and current) importance of activism and protest. Among these short chapters are also reprints of the Bill of Rights, of Henry David Thoreau's essay "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience", and of the USA PATRIOT Act. These three reprints alone make the book worth the ten bucks.

Beyond this, though, *The CD Handbook* also has several chapters explaining the nuts and bolts of protests and civil disobedience. These chapters give sensible, practical, and detailed advice on how to stage a protest, what to expect, and how to be prepared for the inevitable backlash. They also give detailed, practical advice on how to raise a ruckus. It's these chapters that particularly impressed me because they do something that is very rare in political and activist writing: they offer solutions to the problems they discuss.

I ended up reading nearly this entire book while I sat in that mall food court, and perhaps it was my surroundings and the anger that my surroundings fed me, but the book hit me just right. As I was surrounded by the unbridled consumerism, the destruction of workers rights, and the unquestioning loyalty to our corporate culture, I had in my hands something that was, if not an answer, at least a start to solving a lot of society's problems. And that's why I recommend this book. —Sean (Manic D, PO Box 410804, SF, CA 94141)

Palestine

by Joe Sacco, paperback, 285 pgs.

It's quite a testament that within the pages of a non-fiction graphic novel, I learned more about the makeup of the war between Israel and Palestine than I had in twenty years of passively watching network news. The irony doesn't escape me that a comic book is a hundred-fold more informative than endless hours of looking at Tom Brokaw's never-aging head. Although it is clear who Sacco is more empathetic with — the title gives that away — he does a great job at looking at and criticizing both sides, making sure neither becomes mere monsters nor caricatures.

As a comic book artist, there is no doubt to Sacco's talent. His pictures evoke Crumb's style — tiny details are never forgotten. Expressions on people's faces are precise. Where Crumb was often subsumed with women's asses, Sacco tackles refugees and war.

Palestine has very little gore and blood, and instead focuses the dread, anxiety, and the feeling of imminent, corrosive doom most Palestinians feel. There is a lot less rock throwing and more huddled meetings of people, telling stories of woe in cramped places. Network news is primarily interested when a building is blown up or a human body is blown apart, whereas Sacco goes deeper, to the complex and maddening politics, the clash of religions, and the humanity at play.

At first, I didn't think it would be possible for a comic to tackle it all, that elements of understanding would be lost from a narrator with massively drawn lips, but one reason *Palestine* is unbelievably powerful is because it debunks not only what a comic can and cannot do, but it also expands the very parameters of journalism. Say there's an incident and journalists rush to the scene. Those with TV gear or fancy still cameras will be the first to be turned away if what had just

occurred is against party line. But how do you treat a guy with an Instamatic camera, who's going to draw — not render as realistically as possible for a future lineup — a comic of what just went down? An official's regular radar doesn't go off and this is partially why Sacco is allowed so much candid access to a very fucked up situation in the Palestinian refugee camps and the areas in constant dispute. Plus, he's a great listener.

I also suspect Sacco is a person who's at least aware of zine culture, which gives him elbow room to insert his own feelings and emotions to a highly charged situation. Beyond deep feelings, he lets the reader know when he's tired, when he's horny, when he's hungry, and what lines he won't cross (like letting someone lend him their underwear). And then he links these very basic feelings — feelings that everyone has — into the larger plight of this specific conflict. Good examples come in small details, like how the Israelis methodically cut down groves of olive trees under the guise of avoiding possible ambushes. I don't know about you, but I've never thought of a tree as a brother. Sacco takes his time with the trees, explaining that they're treated like members of the family, that, if tended correctly, are kept for generations, and are excellent sources for cooking oil and revenue. All his details — in both his writing and drawing — dovetail back into the war. It's a very precise book, evocative book.

Palestine is an excellent introduction and open invitation to inspect the reasoning behind why Israel and Palestine are in a state of constant war. Highly, highly recommended.

—Todd (Fantagraphics, 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115)

Punk Is a Four-Letter Word

by Ben Weasel, paperback, 176 pgs.

When Ben Weasel used to write for *Maximum Rocknroll* back in the early nineties, I used to read his column all the time. It was usually the first thing I'd read in *MRR*. Then, about six months ago, I was flipping through an old *MRR* and stopped on one of Ben's columns. I started to read it and realized that, in that column at least, Ben wasn't a very good writer. He was an excellent ranter, and I used to love that, but now that I'm older and less open to people ranting, his old column didn't do much for me. So I was a bit hesitant when I opened up *Punk Is a Four Letter Word*. I was even more hesitant because I knew that we'd just taken him on as a writer at *Razorcake*, and I was really hoping that his writing abilities had improved over the past ten years.

As I found out, Weasel's writing has improved a lot. *Punk* is a good way to see exactly how much it's improved. The book starts with Weasel's early *MRR* columns, moves through stuff he wrote for his own zine (*Panic Button*) and for his web site (www.screechingweasel.com) and various other zines, and gets to articles he wrote more recently. It's interesting to read through this book and to watch Weasel's growth as not only a writer but as a thinker. His rants become more subdued (with the exception of his later rants for *Hit List*, which are probably best to ignore), yet his stories become more exciting. You get to read stories about Weasel hanging out with Jawbreaker backstage at a Nirvana show; putting in time as a punk extra in a Ministry video; working shit jobs as a paperboy and library aide and janitor; and finding some peace through, of all things, jogging. All in all, this is a pretty good read and definitely worth picking up.

—Sean (Hope and Nonthings, PO Box 148010, Chicago, IL 60614-8010)

PUNK -O- RAMA

7

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The Civil Disobedience Handbook
 Edited by James Tracy, paperback, 95 pgs.

I almost never go to malls. I hate them. It's not the unbridled consumerism that makes me hate malls. It's not the overall cheesiness or the fact that all the clothes sold in malls are ridiculously overpriced and were sewn for pennies in sweatshops throughout the world. It's not the fact that, like the mass media, all the stores in most malls are owned by a few elite corporations. I mean, all that stuff bugs me. All of that explains why malls are fundamentally evil places. But whenever I find myself stuck in a mall, I look at the faces and clothing of people walking by, and I inevitably realize that these are the people on whom advertising works. I look at these people in their name brand clothes and name brand shoes, wearing name brand make-up, carrying name brand bags from name brand stores and walking to name brand cars, and I think to myself, "If all you bastards weren't such suckers for advertising, I wouldn't be constantly besieged by ads." And then, I feel hatred. It may seem as if I'm digressing here, but I'm not. I'm working myself towards a point.

I got stuck in a mall the other day. It wasn't my fault. I was getting film developed and they told me it would only take an hour. When I came back an hour later, they told me it would be another half hour. Then another half hour. Then another. I ended up sitting at a table adjacent to the Nordstrom's coffee shop for nearly two hours. Since I wanted to do something more productive than just sit and stare loathingly at name brand fuckers, I started to read *The Civil Disobedience Handbook*. It soon became the perfect antidote for everything I was feeling.

The Civil Disobedience Handbook is essentially a collection of essays and tidbits about different ways people have fought and continue to fight for change in their world. It starts off with a brief preface explaining why civil disobedience still matters. From there, the book runs through a series of short chapters documenting the positive changes that civil disobedience has brought about: casting off the shackles of

the British Empire, ending slavery, giving women the right to vote, creating the eight-hour workday, restoring civil rights, protecting a woman's right to an abortion, and moving all the way up to closing down the WTO meetings in Seattle in 1999. None of these chapters do a very thorough job of covering these historical issues, but together, the chapters do an excellent job of demonstrating the historical (and current) importance of activism and protest. Among these short chapters are also reprints of the Bill of Rights, of Henry David Thoreau's essay "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience", and of the USA PATRIOT Act. These three reprints alone make the book worth the ten bucks.

Beyond this, though, *The CD Handbook* also has several chapters explaining the nuts and bolts of protests and civil disobedience. These chapters give sensible, practical, and detailed advice on how to stage a protest, what to expect, and how to be prepared for the inevitable backlash. They also give detailed, practical advice on how to raise a ruckus. It's these chapters that particularly impressed me because they do something that is very rare in political and activist writing: they offer solutions to the problems they discuss.

I ended up reading nearly this entire book while I sat in that mall food court, and perhaps it was my surroundings and the anger that my surroundings fed me, but the book hit me just right. As I was surrounded by the unbridled consumerism, the destruction of workers rights, and the unquestioning loyalty to our corporate culture, I had in my hands something that was, if not an answer, at least a start to solving a lot of society's problems. And that's why I recommend this book. —Sean (Manic D, PO Box 410804, SF, CA 94141)

Palestine

by Joe Sacco, paperback, 285 pgs.

It's quite a testament that within the pages of a non-fiction graphic novel, I learned more about the makeup of the war between Israel and Palestine than I had in twenty years of passively watching network news. The irony doesn't escape me that a comic book is a hundred-fold more informative than endless hours of looking at Tom Brokaw's never-aging head. Although it is clear who Sacco is more empathetic with — the title gives that away — he does a great job at looking at and criticizing both sides, making sure neither becomes mere monsters nor caricatures.

As a comic book artist, there is no doubt to Sacco's talent. His pictures evoke Crumb's style — tiny details are never forgotten. Expressions on people's faces are precise. Where Crumb was often subsumed with women's asses, Sacco tackles refugees and war.

Palestine has very little gore and blood, and instead focuses the dread, anxiety, and the feeling of imminent, corrosive doom most Palestinians feel. There is a lot less rock throwing and more huddled meetings of people, telling stories of woe in cramped places. Network news is primarily interested when a building is blown up or a human body is blown apart, whereas Sacco goes deeper, to the complex and maddening politics, the clash of religions, and the humanity at play.

At first, I didn't think it would be possible for a comic to tackle it all, that elements of understanding would be lost from a narrator with massively drawn lips, but one reason *Palestine* is unbelievably powerful is because it debunks not only what a comic can and cannot do, but it also expands the very parameters of journalism. Say there's an incident and journalists rush to the scene. Those with TV gear or fancy still cameras will be the first to be turned away if what had just

occurred is against party line. But how do you treat a guy with an Instamatic camera, who's going to draw — not render as realistically as possible for a future lineup — a comic of what just went down? An official's regular radar doesn't go off and this is partially why Sacco is allowed so much candid access to a very fucked up situation in the Palestinian refugee camps and the areas in constant dispute. Plus, he's a great listener.

I also suspect Sacco is a person who's at least aware of zine culture, which gives him elbow room to insert his own feelings and emotions to a highly charged situation. Beyond deep feelings, he lets the reader know when he's tired, when he's horny, when he's hungry, and what lines he won't cross (like letting someone lend him their underwear). And then he links these

Punk is a four-letter word

by Ben Weasel, paperback, 176 pgs.

When Ben Weasel used to write for *Maximum Rocknroll* back in the early nineties, I used to read his column all the time. It was usually the first thing I'd read in *MRR*. Then, about six months ago, I was flipping through an old *MRR* and stopped on one of Ben's columns. I started to read it and realized that, in that column at least, Ben wasn't a very good writer. He was an excellent ranter, and I used to love that, but now that I'm older and less open to people ranting, his old column didn't do much for me. So I was a bit hesitant when I opened up *Punk Is a Four Letter Word*. I was even more hesitant because I knew that we'd just taken him on as a writer at *Razorcake*, and I was really hoping that his writing abilities had improved over the past ten years.

As I found out, Weasel's writing has improved a lot. *Punk* is a good way to see exactly how much it's improved. The book starts with Weasel's early *MRR* columns, moves through stuff he wrote for his own zine (*Panic Button*) and for his web site (www.screechingweasel.com) and various other zines, and gets to articles he wrote more recently. It's interesting to read through this book and to watch Weasel's growth as not only a writer but as a thinker. His rants become more subdued (with the exception of his later rants for *Hit List*, which are probably best to ignore), yet his stories become more exciting. You get to read stories about Weasel hanging out with Jawbreaker backstage at a Nirvana show; putting in time as a punk extra in a Ministry video; working shit jobs as a paperboy and library aide and janitor; and finding some peace through, of all things, jogging. All in all, this is a pretty good read and definitely worth picking up.

—Sean (Hope and Nonthings, PO Box 148010, Chicago, IL 60614-8010)

PUNK -O- RAMA

7

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